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Defunding the Left — p.21

Not Full Disclosure: Sexual Harassment of Men

NATIONAL REVIEW

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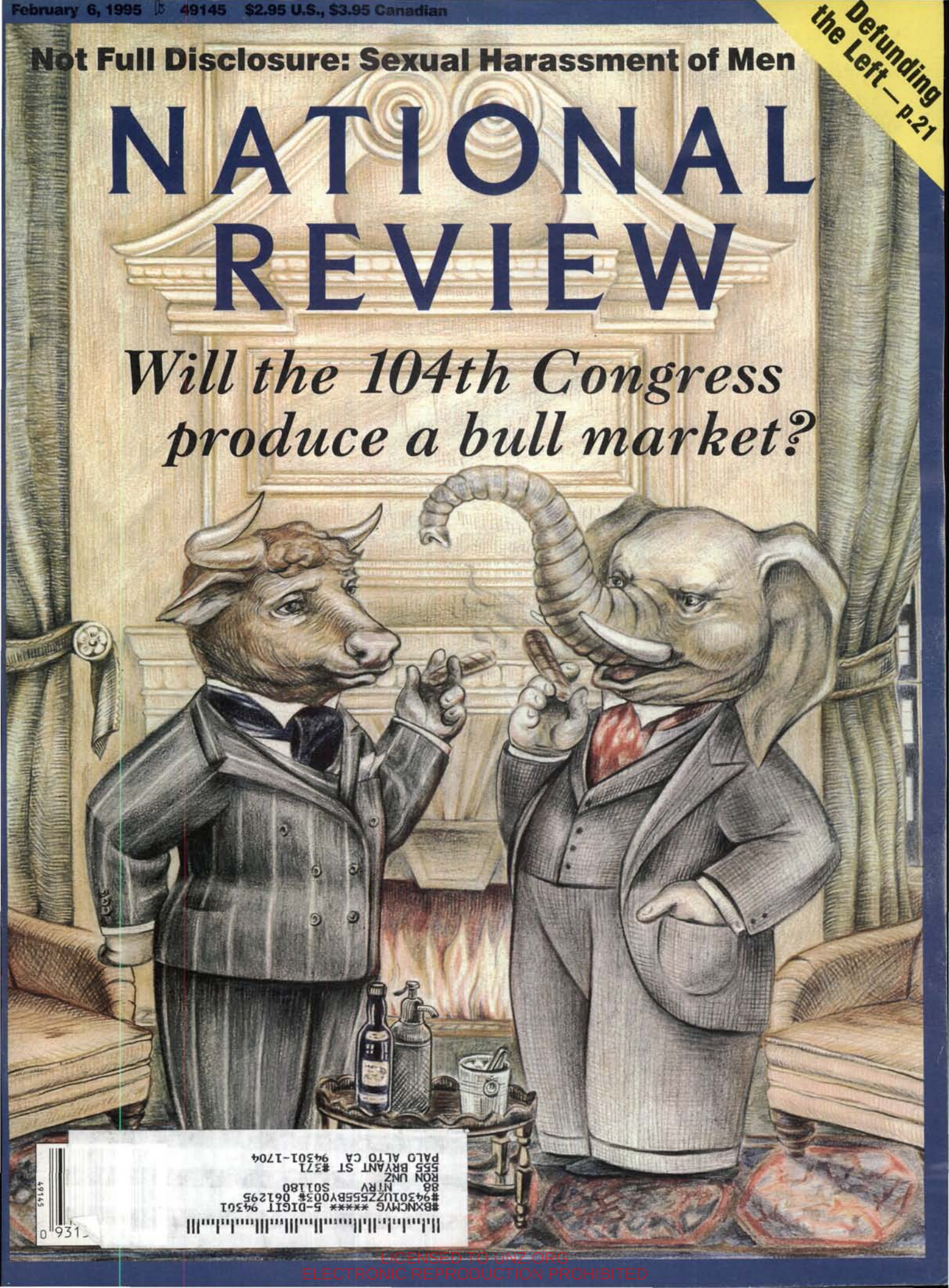

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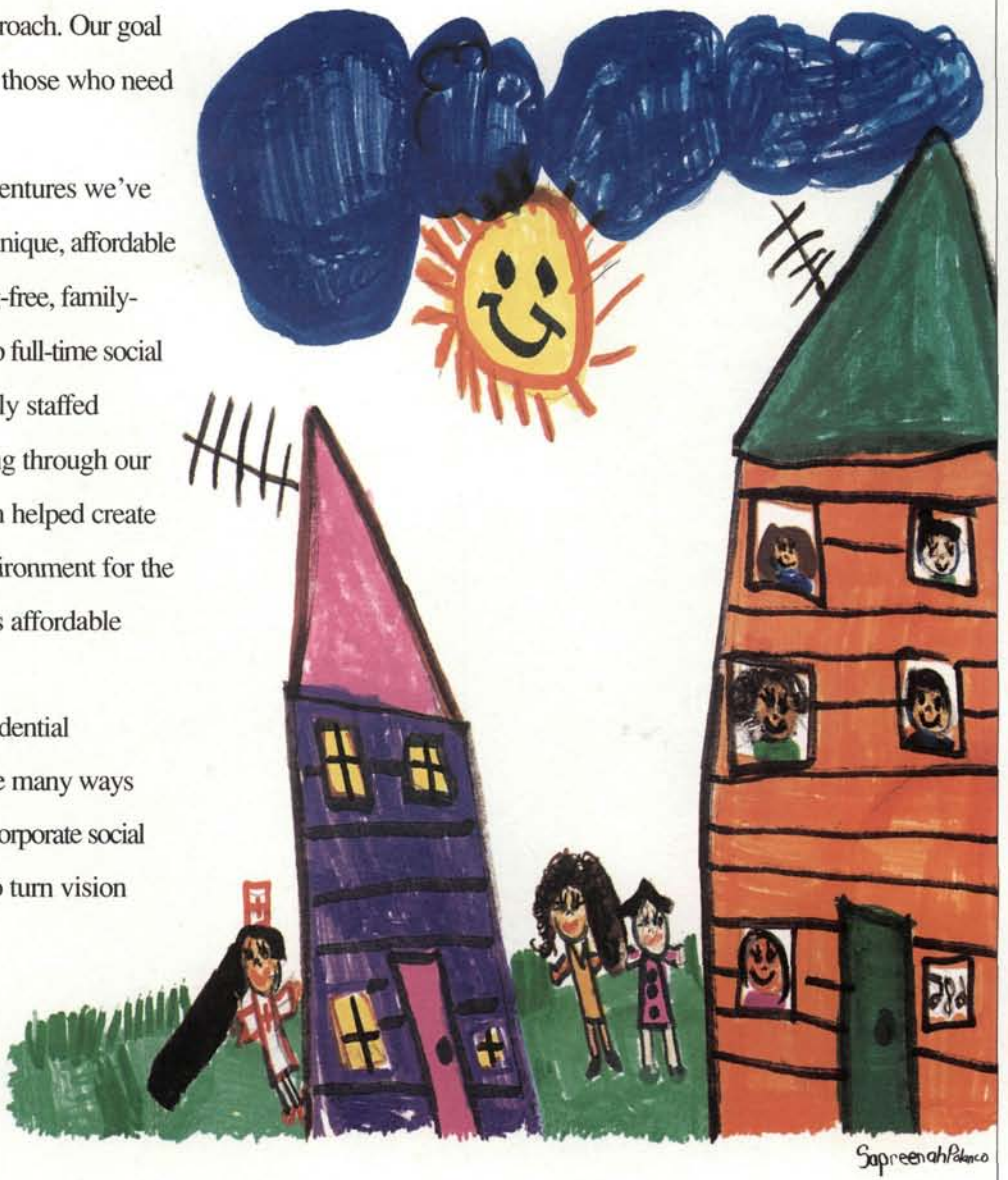

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NATIONAL REVIEW

FEBRUARY 6, 1995 VOL. XLVII, NO. 2

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Cover by Luba Kolomytseva

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Letters

Reflections on Johnny

I read William F. Buckley Jr.'s chosen excerpts from the new Kennedy book by Richard Reeves ["Reeves' Kennedy," Dec. 31] with great interest. Based on these excerpts and Mr. Buckley's interspersed commentary, a charitable judgment of the Kennedy Presidency would be "incompetent."

President Kennedy and his family have been alternately mythologized and tarnished in the public sphere over the last 35 years. I think it would be fairer to admit that President Kennedy, while being far from perfect, made some worthwhile contribution to the public life of this nation.

Paul Kellogg
New York, N.Y.

Like Mr. Buckley, I had fought shy of Mr. Reeves' tome. After all, hadn't most of the scandals surfaced long ago?

The outright scandals, yes—although some of the vignettes given here, like that encounter at the Villa Serbelloni, still have the power to shock. But I found nearly as scandalous—especially coming from the man who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you . . ."—the obsession with his personal political fortunes, and the banality with which it was expressed. "I can't give up a piece of territory like that to the Communists and then get the American people to re-elect me." "There are limits to the number of defeats *I* can defend . . . *I*'ve had the Bay of Pigs, pulling out of Laos, and *I* can't accept a third." (Italics added.) And, with the whine of a Clintonic 3-year-old: "I'm not going to have a library if I only have one term. Nobody will give a damn." John Adams, thou shouldst have been living at that hour.

Gervase Thomson
Belmont, Mass.

I very well remember where I was 31 years ago when my President was murdered, and that memory still brings with it an abysmal sadness, laced with more than a little anger. But I remember, too, how raucously false he seemed. Did you have to be Sherlock Holmes to see through this guy—from his playing to the facile Camelot mythos and the appointment of his absurdly unprepared brother as Attorney General to the Bay of Pigs and his drubbing by Khrushchev in Vienna?

Thanks to this astonishingly adroit (even for Mr. Buckley) "Reeves' Kennedy," we now know there was no throat deep enough to shout, whisper, or groan out the truth, that John F. Kennedy, not Ronald Reagan, was the best actor to occupy the Presidency, that he was not the Teflon President only because virtually nothing sticky was ever thrown his way in the first place, and that he makes Bill Clinton's satyriasis seem almost Franciscan and his "core beliefs" to be made of granite. But where then—while Kennedy was playing plantation politics and warranting assassinations—were the crack investigative teams from the *Washington Post*? The *New York Times* editorial writers and beat reporters? Had they no shame? *Have* they no shame? What can they say? That he didn't traduce the Constitution by covering up a second-rate burglary? (Too bad for Nixon that he didn't have the first-rate Richard Daley pulling *that* heist, too.) Or that he didn't cheat on a Spanish test when at Harvard? Finally we are left with little more than a man of overweening charm in the grip of a sybaritic and drug-dependent post-adolescence.

Three cheers, I say, for the power of an independent, adversary press in all its investigative glory and for the loyalty of old courtiers, assuming any of us can tell the difference.

James Como
Bronxville, NY

"Yes, you can bring me something from the bar . . . my husband!"

Still Asking Why

The last two issues of NATIONAL REVIEW [Dec. 5 and 19] are among the very best that I have read. As I read them cover to cover, I came to think that I, since entering this country from Europe in 1937, cannot remember having come across anything as intelligent, penetrating, relevant, substantial, as what you offered the reading public at this moment of an historical about-face in U.S. politics.

In Europe, in a similar situation, there would have been much more invective, more cheap triumphalism, less genuine effort to penetrate beneath the surface of things. Yours is the one publication in the United States that had every reason to say, in article after article, "We told you so." You did nothing of the kind. In the moment of your great vindication, you never stop asking how things are, why they are as they are, and what sense they make. And that with a theoretical equipment of superb concepts and beautiful language. There is nothing else like your journal in our present culture.

Gerhart Niemeyer
Notre Dame, Ind.

Landmark of Faith

James Bovard's "A Higher Authority" [Dec. 31] is insightful. Making a church a historic landmark may indeed, in some cases, violate "the rights of worshippers" who want to increase social action or modify worship space as recommended by, for instance, the Second Vatican Council—or make other changes in the course of freely practicing their religion. But there is another side to the story. The decision to alter a church doesn't always reflect the will of worshippers. Catholics, for instance, have seen modernizing priests hot from the seminaries, many of which are seedbeds not so much of the Catholic faith as of rebellion against it, use "Vatican II" as an excuse for all kinds of changes that virtually no devout worshippers want. Father Avant may, for instance, want the tabernacle out in the churchyard instead of in the heart of the church; or he may be hell-bent to get rid of those kneelers or statues; or he may find the altar rail disgusting. In cases like these, sometimes the only protection against clerical vandalism is

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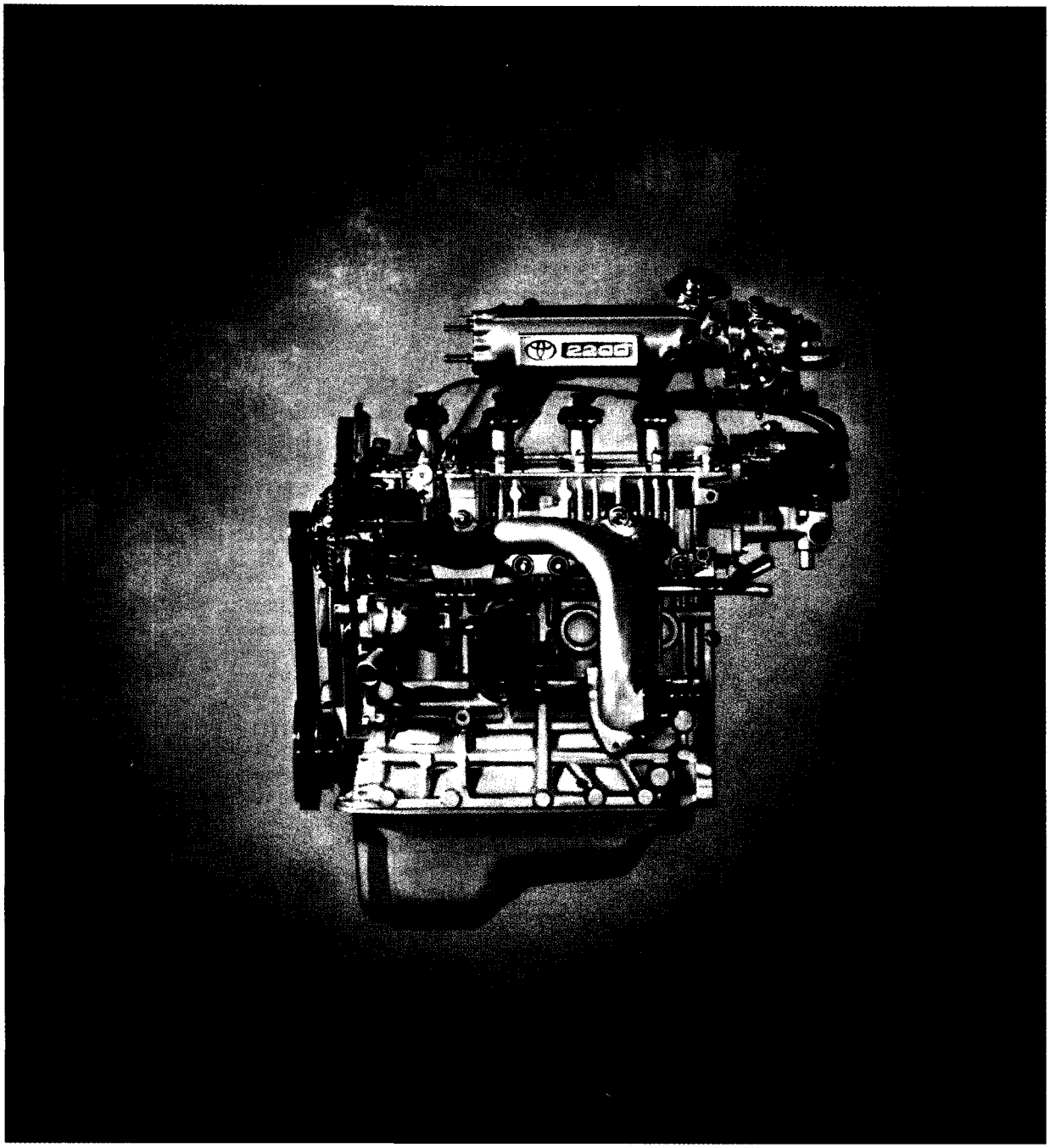

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a historical plaque on the front of the building. Landmark status is sometimes eagerly sought in these cases by parishioners themselves who want to preserve their spiritual life.

Roy Barkley
Permanent Deacon, Diocese of Austin
Pflugerville, Tex.

Partisan Democracy

You note correctly ["The Week," Dec. 19] the urgent need for Western assistance to conservative parties struggling against the Communist revival in Central Europe.

For the International Republican Institute, the fortunes of our democratic allies have been a major preoccupation for the past few years and as a result we commit nearly two-thirds of our resources to strengthening the democratic forces in Central Europe, the Baltics, Russia, and Ukraine. We have opened field offices in Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Albania that provide technical assistance and workshops in party organization and coalition-building throughout the year. Recent events in Poland and Hungary have also stimulated widespread cooperation between IRI and our West European allies, particularly Britain's Conservative Party and the German Christian Democrats, in formulating a joint approach to supporting our democratic friends and working with them to build national grass-roots networks.

However, the work of organizations such as ours and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), while extremely important in strengthening political forces that identify with the West, is no substitute for a strong American foreign policy toward Central Europe that—unlike the Clinton Administration's stated nonpartisanship—aggressively supports those parties and politicians that historically and ideologically identify their fates with the United States and Western Europe.

R. Bruce McColm
President, IRI
Washington, D.C.

Parlez-Vous Which Language?

Jerry Mosier's "Separate but Equal" [Dec. 19] is outstanding, but in fact in Belgium there are *three* official languages: French, Flemish, and German. Along the Belgian–German border there are a few small enclaves of ethnic Germans, many of whom speak only German. They are neither the cause of nor involved in the nasty French–Flemish struggle, which seems to be escalating in spite of national government efforts, but they are recognized at the national level. So official Belgian publications are printed in all three languages, resulting in a "translator's WPA."

Another aspect of this multilingual situation is that road signs are printed in the language of the area they're in. For example, to go from Brussels to Paris, you start out watching for signs to Mons, then switch to signs for Bergen, that being the Flemish name. The German city of Aachen is also Aachen in Flemish, but it is Aix-la-Chapelle in French. Added to the fact that the Belgians are the worst drivers in Europe, this road-sign situation contributes to confusion and slipshod navigation by foreigners, and that can be dangerous to your health.

Since Brussels has become the de facto business center of Europe, the most common commercial language is English. So the Brussels phone books are published in four languages.

English as our national language is the only way to go.

William F. Miller
Oxford, Ala.

On Killing

Like virtually everyone else of pro-life convictions, you express unequivocal condemnation of Paul Hill ["The Week," Dec. 19], who has now been sentenced to die in the electric chair. From a Biblical perspective, this sentence is just, as it was premeditated killing: "Fetch him . . . and deliver him . . . that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him . . ." (Deuteronomy 19: 12-13). But our nation generally doesn't judge Biblically: no verdict in the Menendez case; pre-trial assurance that there will be no death penalty in the O.J. Simpson case.

As famed civil-rights attorney William Bentley Ball told me (we conferred in a last-minute effort to get Hill to secure a defense attorney), Hill's dreadful act is the ultimate kind of protest, and while it cannot be justified, it needs to be explained. The Austrian social scientist Hans Millendorfer says, "Abortion, like euthanasia, is a method in which killing represents a solution." For the would-have-been mothers of thirty million aborted children, killing represented a "solution" to the problem of an unwanted pregnancy—for some, perhaps, an overwhelming problem, for others only an inconvenience. For Mr. Hill, killing represented a solution. Now for the state—and for all those who cannot really face what abortion is and does and are alarmed when one or two citizens become so agonized by the mass killing that they kill, and forfeit their own lives in consequence, in a futile gesture against it—killing Mr. Hill represents a "solution."

Mother Teresa was right: there will be no peace in this land until we stop killing our unborn children. Mr. Hill had the misfortune not only to enrage his enemies, who like abortion, but also to embarrass and shock us who hate it, and so alone of all those who have killed in our country this year—including, we all know, the murdered abortionists—he has no one to plead for him or to sympathize with him. I understand that you have to speak the condemnation that you spoke, but I believe that too much else has been left unsaid.

Harold O. J. Brown
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Deerfield, Ill.

Misleading Statistics?

As a farmer, I was alarmed by the misleading use of statistics by both Ed Rubenstein ["Right Data"] and Rich Lowry ["The Undeserving Rich," Dec. 31]. Mr. Rubenstein clumsily divided the entire USDA budget by the number of farmers to show a per-capita benefit to farmers of over $27,000. Roughly half of recent "farm bill" spending has been spending on programs like food stamps. The real beneficiary of these programs are the urban poor, not farmers. Another chunk of USDA spending is for conservation purposes designed to achieve society's environmental goals on private lands. Still another portion of the USDA budget funds the U.S. Forest Service, with negligible benefits to farmers.

Mr. Lowry spouts the often-used but meaningless statistic that ". . . the net worth of the average farmer is twice that of the average U.S. family." It is implied that this should be used as a means test, which most farmers would then fail. Agriculture is a very capital-intensive enterprise. A farmer with less than twice the average family net worth is probably grossly undercapitalized. Unfortunately for the farmer his high net worth does not necessarily translate into a high income or standard of living.

We do need to cut agricultural subsidies along with all the others, but please let the debate be waged with accurate, meaningful information.

Steve Keller
Monte Vista, Colo.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Songs from the Barricades

■ There are at least three aspects to the conservative revival threatening Capitol Hill, but only two get attention. The first is the drive to reduce government by such devices as a balanced-budget amendment.

Eventually this must include tackling middle-class entitlement programs. You can't balance the budget on the backs of the poor because they don't have much money.

So, as Larry Kudlow argues (page 32), a future Congress will have to consider such expedients as privatizing Social Security. But the Contract with America makes a good start.

The second aspect is the federalist drive to transfer government programs from Washington to the states—also fine, provided that the responsibility for funding such programs is transfered too. Otherwise, Washington-financed but state-provided welfare will become a funded unmandate.

However fiscally virtuous today, state politicians would soon be spending everything Washington sent on local bright ideas—and demanding more. Before long, the phrase "laboratories of democracy" would sound like the crack of doom in conservative ears.

And please don't tell me that "the man who pays the piper calls the tune." The less direct the connection between taxing and spending, the more likely it is that the taxpayer will end up financing a whole bloody orchestra—and listening to his least favorite melodies.

■ Which brings me to the third aspect: ensuring that government broadly conforms to the philosophical convictions of the American people.

This demand is generally heard on directly moral questions like welfare and illegitimacy, or NEA subsidies to calculatedly outrageous "art." It is then denounced in ACLU-speak as the government's "imposing morality" on the people (i.e., ceasing to impose the morality of the academic-bureaucratic-media New Class).

But John Fonte's important article (page 48) reminds us that this "culture war" goes to the heart of politics: what kind of political system do we want?

Most Americans are reasonably content with the U.S. Constitution, a/k/a liberal democracy. The New Class, however, increasingly prefers what Mr. Fonte calls "cultural democracy." Going under guises like "diversity," this rejects majority rule, indeed the very concept of an "American people," replacing them with a political system based on group rights, weighted voting, etc.

Although battle rages daily in federal agencies, colleges, corporations, and cultural institutions, the politicians have been strangely deaf to it. Does Newt Gingrich know that Alvin Toffler has described majority rule as "increasingly obsolete," saying that it "does not extend social justice; it may very well restrict it"?

If so, he had better forget it.

■ WFB's obituary of Murray Rothbard judges mainly his public role and intellectual achievements. Given Murray's treks across the political spectrum, which brought him into frequent conflict with *NR*'s conservatism, that appreciation is bound to be critical.

As Bill remarks, however, Murray was a sparkling social companion. I met him at the Mont Pelerin conference in Montreux in 1972, and soon discovered around the piano that we shared a passion for old Broadway musicals.

I also discovered that we differed on philosophical ultimates. He was a near-anarchist who believed liberty to be almost the sole political virtue; I was a conservative who loved liberty but thought order necessary to it.

"If ever Communism and socialism should vanish from the scene, we are going to end up on opposite sides of the barricades," I warned him.

"True," said Murray, "though that may take some time."

But he lived to see it, and something stranger—a favorable account of libertarianism in London's leftish *Financial Times*.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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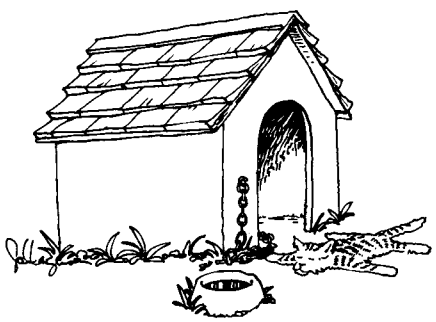
FOR THE RECORD

■ Breathless in D.C. as GOP lawmakers move on all fronts to enact Contract with America. *N.Y. Times*' **Adam Clymer** sees "staggering amount of change" in fact that Congress actually passed legislation in January—House approved on opening day Contract's first item (congressional reform), and Senate soon followed. Next up for floor debate is Balanced Budget Amendment, which sailed through House Judiciary Committee as Chairman **Henry Hyde** (R., Ill.) told squawking Democrats, "It's going to happen, and I suggest you relax and enjoy it." . . . Welfare reform moving through House Ways and Means Committee after Chairman **Bill Archer** (R., Tex.) forced opposition witness HHS Secretary **Donna Shalala** to admit **Clinton** Administration bill also mentions "orphanages" for welfare kids. There was praise for Contract's welfare changes from conservative blacks at meeting of Minority Mainstream at National Press Club. Co-founder of new group, freshman Rep. **J. C. Watts** (R., Okla.), spoke for Contract proposals, but **Gwen Daye Richardson**, another cofounder, said reforms still aren't strict enough. . . . Meanwhile, new pro-term-limits group of representatives, "Team 290" (after number of House votes needed for passage), held glitzy press conference led by Rep. **Bill McCollum** (R., Fla.) and featuring term-limits convert, columnist **George Will**. . . . GOP budget maestro **John Kasich** (R., Ohio) preparing to submit appropriations bill calling for over $400 billion in spending cuts and, according to some reports, elimination of four Cabinet-level departments (HUD, Education, Energy, Commerce). . . . House Republicans have upset Defense Secretary **William Perry** with plans for defense bill in early February which will rule out UN control of U.S. troops in trouble spots and order Pentagon to build nationwide missile defense at "earliest possible date." . . . Further signs of conservative blitzkrieg: Clinton OMB chief **Alice Rivlin** is backing Contract's call for line-item veto, and Senate debate on bill to abolish unfunded federal mandates has led to rediscovery of Tenth Amendment. Even two moderate senators joining the right-wing fun: **Nancy Kassebaum** (R., Kan.) attacked the Job Corps, and fellow moderate **Larry Pressler** (R., S.D.) wants to defund Public Broadcasting. . . . Summing up conservative frolic on Capitol Hill is ever-quotable **Kate O'Beirne** of Heritage Foundation: "There are more **Reagan** Republicans in Washington now than there were during the Reagan years."

■ Headline on *N.Y. Times* editorial, "Anybody Home?" speaks to disarray in Clinton White House and Democratic Party ranks. In a bizarre press conference, Sen. **Bob Kerrey** (D., Neb.) announced he had finally given in to demands that he head up Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) but said he wouldn't get involved with "fundraising operation" and actually criticized the existence of committees like DSCC. . . . No sooner was Sen. **Christopher Dodd** (D., Conn.) announced as party's new general chairman than Delaware Democratic Party chairman **Gary Hindes** cited "severe reservations" about Dodd's ultraliberalism and added: "Some of us would have preferred someone more centrist and moderate." . . . Former Pennsylvania Gov. **Robert Casey** told *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* he may challenge "far-out liberal" Clinton in primaries to stop party's "leftward lurch" and counter



Administration's "left-wing ideologues" and "radicals out of the mainstream." . . . Presidential preview on GOP side: N.Y. conservatives planning kickoff event for **Phil Gramm** March 27. Co-chairmen: **Dusty Rhodes**, president of *NR*; former Treasury Secretary **Bill Simon**; and investment bigwigs **Lew Lehrman** (**Mario Cuomo**'s 1982 opponent) and **Joe Fogg**.

■ *L.A. Times* reports Hollywood is in a "tailspin" from GOP putsch. TV producer **Len Hill** told *Times* that Clinton failures have led to a "breakdown in the monolith of Hollywood liberalism." . . . But will PBS ever get the message? Despite **Newt Gingrich**'s threat to "zero out" taxpayer dollars, public broadcasting giant now airing five-part *America's War on Poverty*, which Acton Institute's **Robert Sirico** calls one-sided, blatant political propaganda. Sirico, a Paulist father, writes in *Washington Times* op-ed piece that the series is an "unambiguous" attempt to pressure Congress out of welfare reform.

■ Far East watchers on full alert for power struggle as Chinese leader **Deng Xiaoping**'s daughter, **Xiao Rong**, admits her father's health is declining daily. . . . Prime Minister **Vo Van Keit** has ordered all Vietnamese officials to learn English by 2000 after spurning Paris's appeals (and aid) to keep French as second language. . . . Following end to import barrier, Japanese lining up to buy 80-cent apples from U.S.—a bargain in comparison to Japanese brands costing up to $6. . . . Mexican President **Ernesto Zedillo**, rocked by economic crisis over peso, may change the subject and crack down on corrupt Mexican police and Colombian drug barons who deliver two-thirds of U.S.-bound cocaine through his country. . . . Latest victim of revelations from East German secret-police files: hugely popular TV interviewer **Lutz Bertram**; after admitting on air he was informer, Bertram resigned from German network.

■ Conservative talk-show hostess **Arianna Huffington** warned Washington audience about network news personalities. **Connie Chung**'s "Just-between-the-two-of-us" ambush of **Kathleen Gingrich** in long TV interview shows "we should not leave our mothers alone with them . . ."

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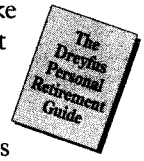

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THE WEEK

■ Looks like Newt Gingrich won't be hiring his mother as House historian.

■ In a column about what Connie Chung heard from Newt's mother, who heard it from Newt, Frank Rich of the *New York Times* lets slip a telling phrase: Why doesn't anyone give Mrs. Clinton "an apology, even if only out of minimal respect for her office?" But Mrs. Clinton holds no office. No one ever voted for her for anything. The power she wields flows from her mate, and from the Praetorianization of the Presidency over the last sixty years. We would never call a lady a bitch, on or off the record. But what we call political usurpers is too harsh for Mr. Rich's tender ears.

■ Big changes at CBS. From now on, Dan Rather will whisper the news into Connie Chung's ear.

■ Affirmative action, the great stealth issue in American politics, may soon show up on the national radar screen. Leading the way is the California Civil Rights Initiative. Aimed for the ballot in November 1996, it would amend the state's constitution to bar reverse discrimination in all matters involving state education, employment, and contracts. The California Republican Party has endorsed the CCRI unanimously; polls predict it would win overwhelmingly; and the Democrats, mindful of the deadly fallout from Proposition 187, are having a cow. Already the CCRI is affecting the national debate. A group of former Reagan and Bush Administration officials, organized by Clint Bolick of the Institute for Justice, are formulating a CCRI clone for the Federal Government (tentative title: "The Civil Rights Act of 1995"). Mr. Bolick and others are also working to get the Appropriations Committee to "zero out" programs that support the government's quota regime. A prime target is the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, the nerve center for federal set-asides. Clinton Administration civil-rights officials, who until now have operated in the shadows, are likely to have intensive oversight hearings to look forward to as well. Supporters of affirmative action will find all the new attention most uncomfortable—because a target as vulnerable as racial preference survives only sight unseen.

■ The miner's canary for the Republican revolution is the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. If it doesn't die, that will mean the atmosphere in Washington will has stayed the same, supportive of every form of federal life, and the GOP will eventually become acclimated like everyone else. It's not that the CPB is costly by Federal Government standards, but that it's the entitlement of the political class. As such it will be the beneficiary of a fierce defense—the *New York Times* has already run a lead story on it—that Republicans can breach only if they're immune to the usual intimidation. Winning will require being gauche.

■ Voice of reason, from columnist Eric Mink: "If public television falls victim to the scorched-earth extremists who have sworn to rip out its guts and feed the entrails to the wolves of commercialism, it will not be without a battle." But aren't liberals pro-wolf?

■ Kathleen Gingrich has revealed that Newt once said high taxes are a bitch.

■ A little-noticed gag rule has finally been abolished on Capitol Hill. Not only are conservative experts lining up to testify before congressional committees that once wouldn't let them through the door, they're the main attraction. Congressional testimony had been a cog in Washington's cyclical spending machine; according to James Payne in *The Culture of Spending*, from 1978 to 1987 advocates of higher federal spending dominated the hearings by a ratio of 145 to 1. No more. As *NR*'s Contributing Editor Kate O'Beirne (also a Heritage vice president) says, "The sunset people are now appearing at 10 A.M." At a recent Labor and Human Resources Committee hearing, Robert Woodson, president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, argued that "individuals are better able to choose their education than the government." Senator Spence Abraham (R., Mich.) feigned a double-take. Blasphemy! As someone said, get used to it.

■ Dick Cheney has declined to be a presidential candi-

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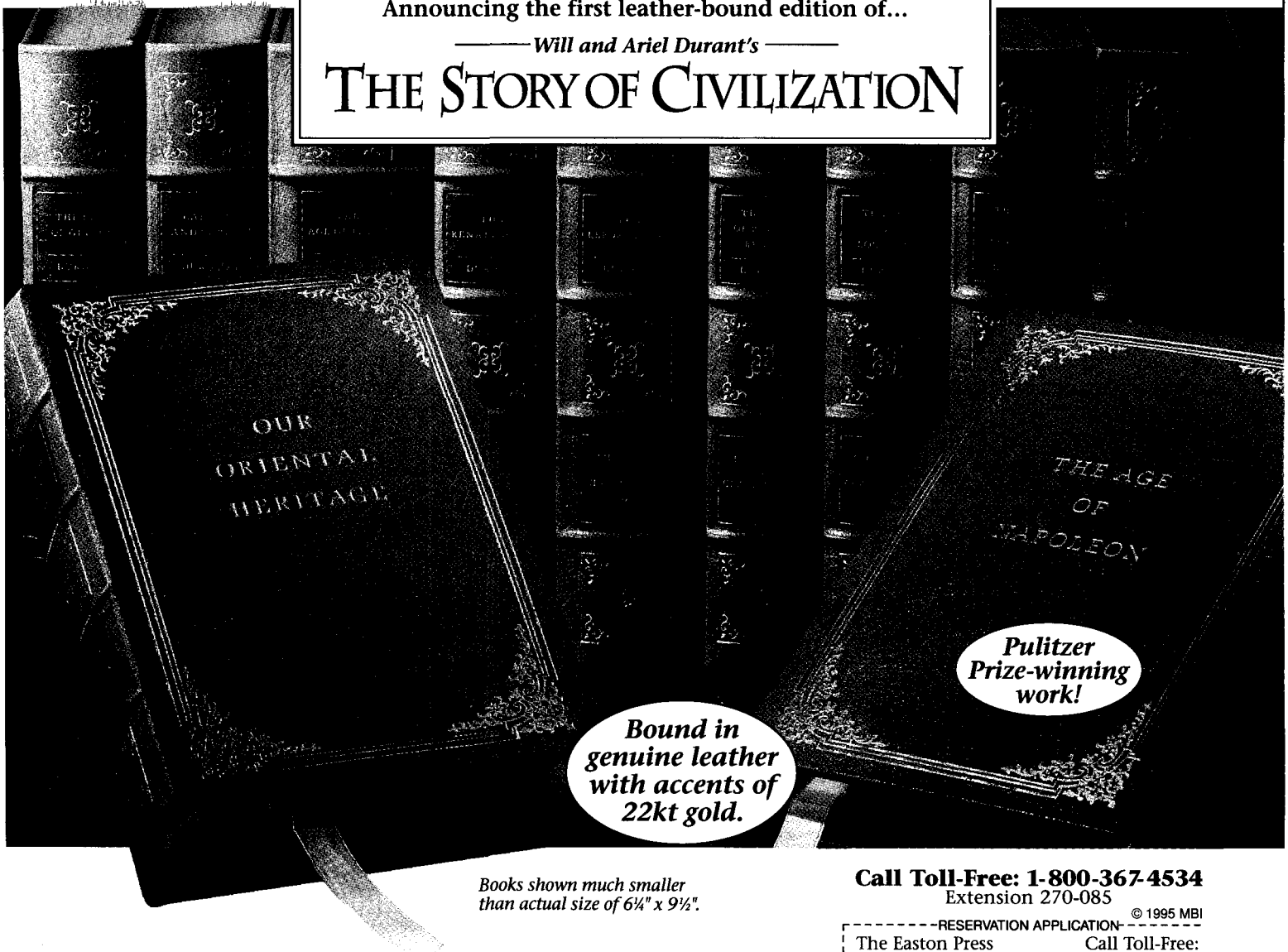
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date, a role his years of appointive officeholding inside the Beltway had unsuited him for. They do suit him to be secretary of state—more so than the supple but empty James Baker, far more so than the official and unofficial incumbents, the wraith and the poet. He can spend the next two years boning up on Kosovo—harder work than stumping Iowa and New Hampshire, but somebody has to do it.

■ Mr. Clinton met with 11 of the 13 new Democratic congressmen and gave them a pep talk on a "middle-class bill of rights." "We're all very enthusiastic," said one, hardly in office and already stretching the truth.

■ The liberal establishment, understandably disconsolate, has decided to pick off vulnerable conservatives. *The New York Review of Books* got an ex-conservative, Michael Lind, to do a hit on Pat Robertson. Lind picks a vulnerable spot indeed: Robertson's best-selling book, *The New World Order*, which details the nefarious doings of a conspiracy of international bankers over more than two centuries. Paranoia about bankers runs deep in the American mind, and Robertson has imbibed all of it, throwing in Freemasons and the Bavarian Illuminati for good measure. Lind makes this farrago out to be be even worse than it is, accusing Robertson of anti-Semitism despite his attempts to steer clear of it. Why, Lind keens, haven't conservatives expelled Robertson and the Christian Coalition from their ranks? Partly because Robertson was never a serious political figure in the manner of, say, Bob Dole: a clergyman who was never elected dogcatcher enjoys a certain latitude, because he is not going anywhere (witness Jesse Jackson). Robertson's writings have also gotten a free pass because they are not part of his political pitch. Robertson did not mention them on the hustings of Iowa. Ralph Reed does not expound on them today. To argue that politically active evangelicals are "really" engaged in a crusade against Jews and Freemasons is—well, conspiratorial. We await Professor Lind's review of himself.

■ Connecting cause and effect is rarely the forte of economic journalists. Or Clinton Administration policymakers. Case in point: in a single day last week the newspapers reported that a) black unemployment is at its lowest level in two decades (9.8 per cent), and b) the minimum wage, in constant dollars, is also at a low, down about one-third from its 1970s level. No connection was made. Yet if there is one issue that most economists agree on, it's that a high minimum wage is the kiss of death for poor, unskilled individuals looking for jobs. Indeed, the black unemployment problem dates to the mid 1960s, when minimum-wage coverage was extended to small businesses and retailing. Prior to that, black teenagers found work at about the same rate as white teenagers. By the late 1970s, when the minimum wage was at its inflation-adjusted high point, a white youth was 27 per cent more likely to be employed than a black youth. The erosion in the minimum wage since then has removed a major hiring disincentive. Incredibly enough, the Clinton Administration wants to make good on its campaign pledge to raise the minimum wage. Help blacks: vote Republican.

■ That giant sucking sound you hear is U.S. monetary aid going south to Mexico.

■ For years, America celebrated two national holidays less than a month apart, Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays. Now it celebrates Martin Luther King Day, and Presidents' Day—the latter a kind of historical attic holding Lincoln, Washington, Franklin Pierce, Jimmy Carter, et al. Presidents' Day demeans Washington and Lincoln, who are not only American but world-historical titans. It also suggests that America has a Black Day and a White Day—a segregation of festivity that would have puzzled King. If celebrations must be spread out, they could be tied to anniversaries of important acts—the Gettysburg Address, the "I Have a Dream" speech—even as Columbus Day celebrates his landfall. If the present set-up continues, and the first female President has a January birthday, will we dump Washington, Lincoln, and King into Men's Day?

■ The feds have just shelled out $338,000 to Gaston and Monique Roberge in settlement of a law suit they filed against the Army Corps of Engineers. Back in 1986 the Roberges, already in their seventies, had a contract to sell their retirement nest egg, a 2.8-acre vacant lot. But the Army Corps claimed the lot included wetland and unapproved fill. The fill predated the Clean Water Act under which the Corps claims to regulate wetlands, and wetland preservation is never mentioned in that Act. But the Corps harassed the Roberges for years, denying permits and demanding dirt removal costing $100,000—as much as the land was worth. In 1991 the Roberges got help from the Maryland-based Fairness to Landowners Committee,

Crushing Chechnya

Though Peter would have understood,
  Along with crazy Paul,
And Catherine would have signed assent
  Presiding at a ball,
One would have thought, post-Holocaust,
  The West would give a sign
Appropriate for goings-on
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which turned up a July 1987 memo from Army Corps officer Jay Clement that stated: "Roberge would be a good one to squash and set an example." Clement signed himself "Maytag Repairman," suggesting he was underworked and bored. Faced with this evidence, the Feds offered to settle. So we end up paying twice for the bureaucrats' harassment of us.

■ President Clinton didn't let his secretary of state resign, and thank goodness. We'd miss having Jimmy Carter to kick around.

■ The official U.S. estimate of how long it will take Iran to build a nuclear bomb at its present pace is anywhere between 7 and 15 years, according to U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry. Other senior U.S. and Israeli sources have put it as soon as 5 years. Either way, the time to put a crimp in Iran's access to sensitive technology is now. The Administration seems aware of the danger, pressing our allies to restrict their transfers of technology to Iran. But there is still a need for Congress to take up where it left off last year and put in place a serious program of strategic-export controls, to strengthen our hand in the multilateral effort.

■ Your collection-box money at work: United Methodist Bishop Judith Craig of Ohio got to meet PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat on a November "fact-finding" trip sponsored by the Middle East Council of Churches (according to the *United Methodist Reporter*). It was a religious experience. At the end of a forty-minute Gaza meeting, the visitors and Chairman Arafat joined hands around the table while Bishop Craig offered a prayer for peace, wisdom, and strength from God. Then, Arafat "grasped my hand," she reported, "looked intently into my eyes and said, 'Pray for me every day.'" Whether he was asking for absolution for thirty years of complicity in terrorism is not clear. In any case, Bishop Craig says she now prays daily for him. And we should pray for them both.

■ The Postal Service raised first-class rates to 32 cents, having thoughtfully made sure that no 32-cent stamps were available, and that few 3-cent stamps were available to add to the old 29-cent stamps, in case customers had any.

■ "In a sense, virtuality at the mental level is something I think you'd find in most leadership over historical periods. But in addition, the thing I want to talk about today, and that I find fascinating, is that we are not at a new place. It is just becoming harder and harder and harder to avoid the place we are." Is this a) an anthology of fortune cookies, b) an old Firesign Theater album, or c) Speaker Newt Gingrich? Maybe five-letter words are better.

The Early Book

Lamar's been running, though the sound
Of hoofbeats fails to shake the ground,
While Arlen actually lost
The morning his chapeau was tossed;
Which concentrates the mind on Phil,
A candidate whose platform skill
Lulls like the buzzing of the bee
And adds to one's anxiety.

W. H. VON DREELE

Welfare States?

THE Republican drive toward welfare reform has hit some snags. First came Newt Gingrich's suggestion that the GOP may not cut legal (but non-citizen) immigrants off welfare. The Contract with America's welfare-reform bill relies heavily on a cut-off for savings, about $22 billion over five years. But the smart set that dreams up *Time* magazine covers featuring Newt Gingrich as Scrooge consider this mean, as do Republican moderates. So, House Republicans were treated to the strange sight of Mr. Gingrich, creator and enforcer of the Contract, unilaterally backing off one of its provisions. Gingrich explained to the Republican conference that the Contract is an evolving document (sorta like the Constitution?). Perhaps; but the impetus for its evolution shouldn't be off-the-cuff remarks from the Speaker. Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer and Clay Shaw (R., Fla.), chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over welfare, suggested as much publicly. Hard numbers are difficult to get, but it's clear that many elderly parents of immigrants are coming to the United States to take part in a government-funded retirement program. If they are entitled to the generosity afforded them by the welfare system, then isn't everyone else whom Republicans want to knock off the rolls?

A more fundamental problem is the wrangling between Republican governors and congressmen. Governors are willing to take back welfare in the form of block grants from the Federal Government, but they want no restrictions on what they can do with the money. This position has the support of some conservatives who like its look of federalist experimentalism: some states will find reforms that work, and those will become the model for the nation. But congressional Republicans—including Clay Shaw, again, a pleasant surprise to conservatives who had worried that he would be soft—insist on certain restrictions to go with the money: a cut-off of AFDC payments after five

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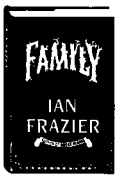

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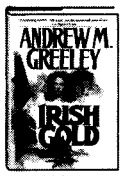

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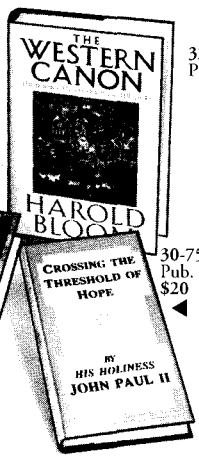

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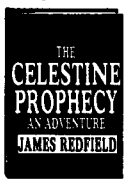

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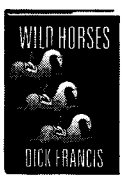

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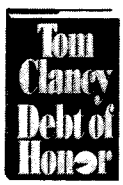

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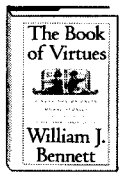

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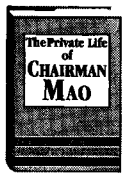

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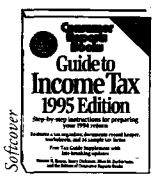

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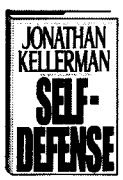

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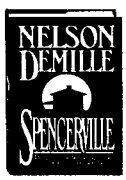

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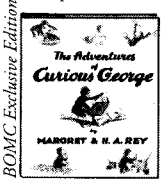

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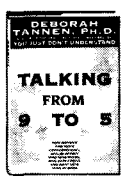

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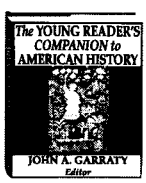

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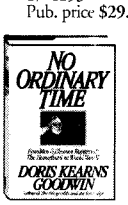

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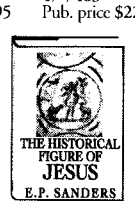

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years; a work requirement; a requirement that mothers establish paternity before receiving benefits; no cash payments to unwed mothers under age 18; no payments to non-citizens; no increased payments to women who have children while on the rolls.

The philosophical justification is that block grants are still a federal program, and the Federal Government retains some responsibility to see that they aren't used merely to perpetuate the status quo. The practical reality is that governors aren't quite the don't-hold-us-back reformers of popular myth. Many of them are Neanderthal Democrats or indifferent Republicans. "It is the sluggards who are the majority of governors, who have to be pushed into reform," says the Heritage Foundation's Robert Rector, the architect of the hard-edged Talent–Faircloth reform bill. But even the more conservative Republicans at the state level have been left behind in the shifting debate over welfare.

If governors feel strongly about supporting teenagers who have children or keeping welfare recipients on the rolls after five years, they can always spend their state's own money on these ends. But for federal lawmakers to make federal funds available to help perpet-

Right Data

Clean Little Secrets

SIERRA CLUB membership, now 500,000, has declined by 125,000 since 1990. After quadrupling between 1970 and 1990, the Wilderness Society's budget is down 20 per cent. The National Audubon Society is teetering toward bankruptcy.

Big Environment has hit a wall. Common explanations include a soft economy, a lack of focus, and mismanagement by executives who, according to *The Nation*, are "elitist, highly paid, detached from the people." The media never mention the obvious: environmental scare tactics no longer work because there is less to be scared about. Hard evidence for this comes from *Leading Environmental Indicators*, published by the Pacific Research Institute.

Air Quality. EPA data show man-made particulate emissions (dust, soot, smoke, and other items that can lodge in the lungs) are down 50 per cent from 1970 levels, chiefly because of catalytic converters. Urban smog levels have declined precipitously. In 1983, the 23 largest metropolitan areas exceeded the federal ozone standard a combined total of 1,019 times; by 1992 this number had fallen to 310.

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2) emissions, once mistakenly thought to cause "acid rain," have been cut by one-quarter since 1970. The government made these reductions unnecessarily expensive by requiring utilities to use scrubbers rather than allowing a switch to low-sulphur coal. Amazingly enough, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments mandate another 50 per cent SO_2 reduction by the year 2000.

Airborne lead emissions are the biggest success story, plunging more than 97 per cent since 1970.

Water Quality. Toxic industrial discharge into American waterways "has been eliminated, or is well on its way to being eliminated," according to the report. In 1970, 42 per cent of the population was served by waste-water treatment plants; now 74 per cent is. As a result, drinking water is safer than ever. River and lake pollution is harder to gauge. Data come from state officials who use different methodologies and who change the areas assessed from year to year. The latest snapshot—the EPA's 1990 inventory of U.S. waterways—found that 75 per cent of the assessed river miles were "swimmable" and 80 per cent were "fishable." The report notes that "states have a bureaucratic incentive to assess those waters where problems are most likely to be found," thereby overstating the problem.

Land Use. Since the end of World War II, urban and suburban sprawl has consumed about 1 million acres of land a year. That sounds bad, but cities still cover just 3.1 per cent of the total land area of the continental United States. In fact, the amount of land newly dedicated to parks and wilderness grew twice as fast as urbanized areas over the same period. This doesn't include the national parks, private forestland, and rangelands, which together account for 65 per cent of total land area.

The regulations so dear to Big Green reduce national income by 2.1 per cent per year, or about $1,000 per household, according to the EPA. By the year 2000 these costs will be one-third higher, thanks to the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments and other recent legislation. At current levels of GDP this translates to a loss of about $196 billion, or about half the total spent on education by federal, state, and local governments.

Are the benefits worth this cost? Perhaps not, for it appears that air and water quality was improving at least as fast *before* the environmental onslaught. Paul Portney of Resources for the Future points out that SO_2 levels declined by almost 50 per cent during the 1960s, and ambient particulates fell by 20 per cent. European nations, with less stringent regulations than ours, have enjoyed greater reductions in emissions, according to the OECD. Cleaner water and air are the unintended, albeit happy, by-products of competitive pressures facing all capitalist economies.

—ED RUBENSTEIN

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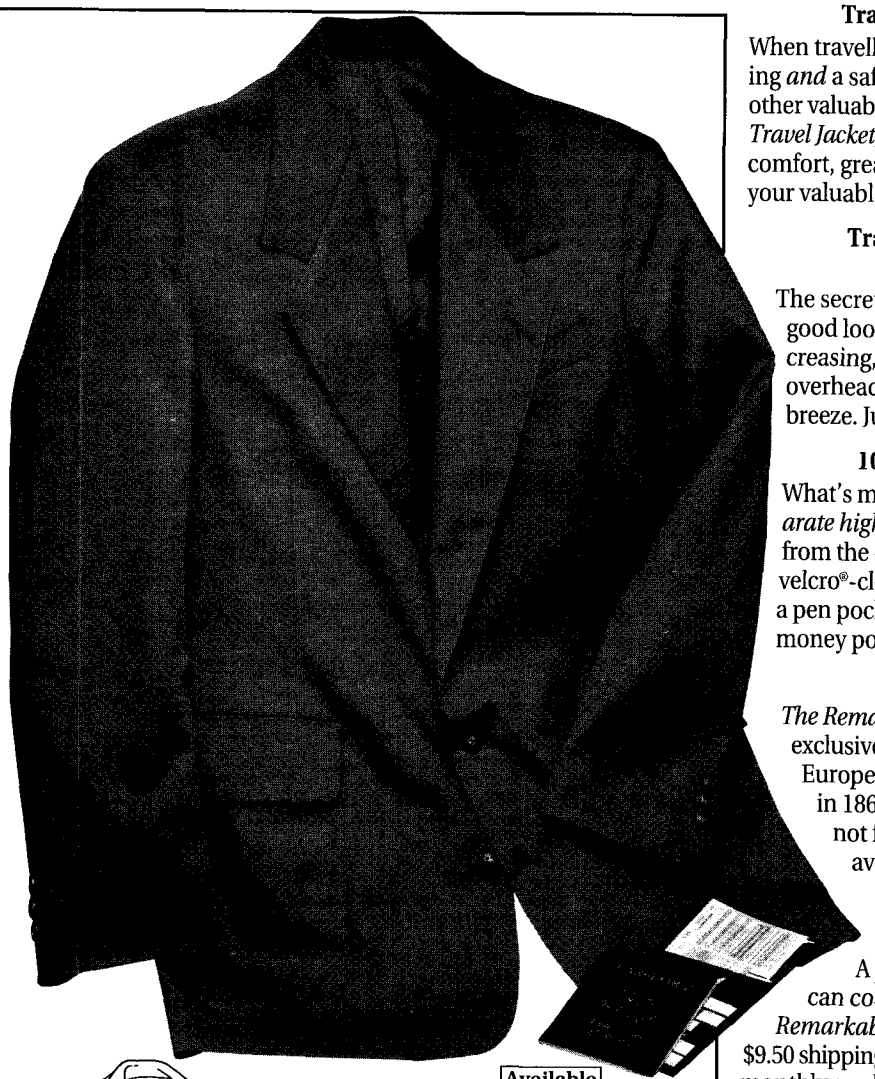

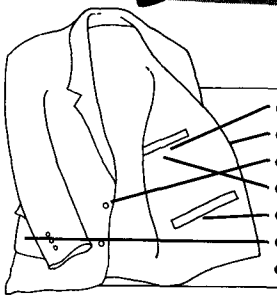

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uate the system's worst problems, without so much as sketching the outlines of reform, would be a travesty. Why even call it reform?

Contract with Mexico

VOTERS who want smaller and more frugal government at home, with a new emphasis on personal responsibility, expect no less in our policy dealings abroad. That's not what they're getting from a joint Democratic-Republican Mexican bailout.

The Mexicans' devaluation of the peso was a disaster they brought upon themselves. When they should have maintained a stable monetary policy, they did the opposite. The supposedly independent central bank worked feverishly to expand the peso money supply in the run-up to August's election. From 3½ per cent in early 1993, the annual growth rate of the Mexican monetary base exploded to 20 per cent during the first half of 1994. To hedge against huge losses, U.S. investors began dumping their peso-dominated Mexican Treasury bills (cetas) in early 1994 in favor of dollar-indexed debt instruments.

By the end of the year, the peso was clearly overvalued. If the Mexican government had wanted to sustain it at the old rate of 3.5 pesos to the dollar in the face of the currency whirlwind just before Christmas, it would have had to introduce a monetary policy of great severity and long duration. Admittedly, a reasonably stringent monetary policy is required to ensure that a once-for-all increase in the prices of imports caused by devaluation does not feed into a permanent inflation. Otherwise a downward spiral of inflationary devaluations begins.

What is seriously mistaken about the Mexican–IMF package, however, is the addition of large tax increases and wage and price controls. These will depress and distort economic activity, without adding anything useful to a sound-money approach. While the devaluation itself was a regrettable bowing to economic necessity brought on by past follies, the entire package sounds too much like President Nixon's disastrous 1971 U-turn that launched a decade of high inflation, low growth, and falling productivity in America. What is needed to sustain the peso in the long term is fiscal measures to promote growth such as deregulation, tax cuts, and further privatization.

Ideally, these should be matters for Mexicans. But when Mexico formally devalued the peso on December 20, U.S. banks, pension funds, and insurance companies ran for help to the U.S. Treasury. The Administration promptly proposed a U.S.-taxpayer bailout of up to $40 billion of loan guarantees not so much for Mexico as for Wall Street. Inexplicably, GOP leaders Newt Gingrich and Robert Dole signed off on the deal.

The GOP should strongly oppose this bailout. Whatever tough-sounding conditions are attached, it is all too likely to persuade the Mexican authorities to continue their spendthrift and soft-money ways. With a crippled economy, the Mexican government would then be driven to default on the U.S. loan guarantees, costing American taxpayers a savings-and-loan RTC fortune, and again ballooning our budget deficit.

Dole, Gingrich & Co. should work for a completely different set of policies to restore investor confidence in Mexico. An Argentine-type currency board should be established, where money-supply creation is strictly limited to the value of foreign exchange and gold reserves on hand, the peso is re-linked to the dollar at a sustainable fixed exchange rate, and the ordinary Mexican can, if he wishes, change his pesos into dollars at any time. This would effectively dollarize the Mexican economy. Wage and price controls should be lifted. Tax rates should be reduced. Privatization should be stepped up. This package would restore confidence and inflows of global capital far more effectively than any U.S. loan guarantee.

While most of us thought we voted November 8 for a Contract with America, it turns out we are being handed a very expensive Contract with Mexico. If the GOP goes along, it should prepare itself for an electoral backlash.

Budgetary Backpedaling

ON January 5 Congressional Budget Office director Robert Reischauer glumly reported that the federal budget deficit for 1994–98 will be $103 billion higher than originally expected. Eighteen months into the Clinton budget package . . . poof! more than 20 per cent of the budget savings have magically vanished. Sound familiar? It should. George Bush's 1990 deal also promised hundreds of billions of dollars of deficit reduction, but instead yielded the highest five-year deficit totals in history. The good news for Mr. Bush is that now Bill Clinton is within striking distance of unseating him as the most fiscally inept President in American history.

The President's principal economic advisors spend much of their time these days gloating that the deficit for this year, the climax of the cyclical recovery, will fall to $176 billion. Here's what they don't tell you: the deficit rises to $250 billion by 1999, $300 billion by 2001, $350 billion by 2003, $400 billion by 2005. Mercifully the projections end there.

What is really fascinating about these latest gloomy budget numbers is *why* the deficit forecast has darkened. The deficit has been revised upward, explains Mr. Reischauer, because of "higher than anticipated interest payments and lower than expected revenue

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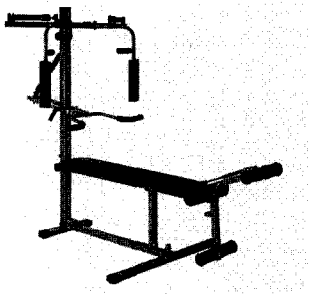
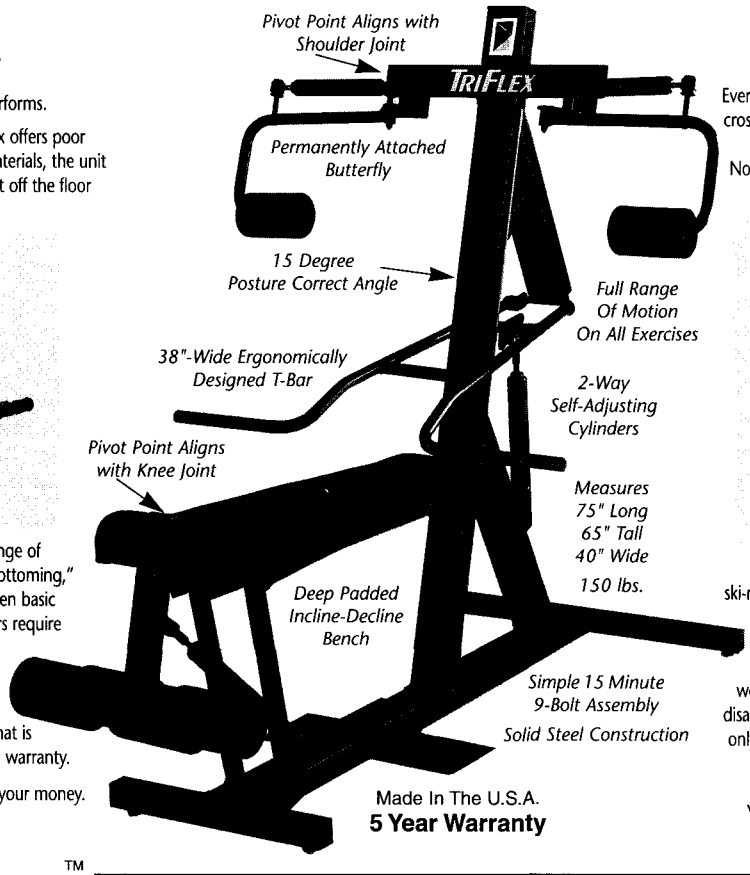


Design limitations severely restrict range of motion, resulting in "topping" or "bottoming," and prevent you from performing even basic exercises such as squats. The cylinders require constant adjustment, work in only one direction, and the leg extension cylinder is undersized.

HealthMax is an imported product that is supported by only a one-year limited warranty.

All in all, you get very little value for your money.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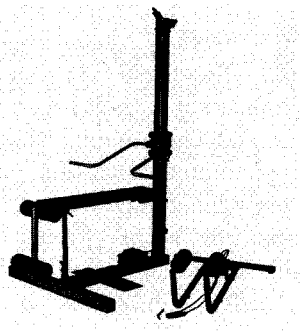

Using a similar clutching mechanism as the ski-machine, long lengths of cable are threaded through 18 pulleys to the different attachments. The cables and pulleys continually need rerouting during your workout, requiring frustrating assembling and disassembling. The resistance is in one direction only, with a spring recoil, much like pulling the starter rope on your lawn mower.

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growth." So much for the lower interest rates we were supposed to get from Clintonomics. As for the lower receipts, it appears that the CBO's record of vastly overestimating revenue growth from tax increases remains unblemished. The budget office is a flashing neon-lighted billboard for the virtues of dynamic scorekeeping and a fit bard for the Bush–Clinton years.

At the Water's Edge

THE *New York Times* denounced it as the equivalent of "declar[ing] war" on the President, but Bob Dole's bill introduced in the Senate on January 4 is in fact a constructive contribution to the nation's foreign policy. S-5 would repeal the 1973 War Powers Resolution—that Vietnam-era attempt to rein in presidential power by requiring congressional authorization for a variety of military actions. Republicans have consistently stood for repeal of this (undoubtedly unconstitutional) statute and should continue to do so—and not only because the White House may soon return to Republican hands.

It may seem odd to grant greater discretion to a President whose misguided adventures abroad (Somalia, Haiti) have given rise to such unease. Yet it is the right thing to do for the Presidency as an institution; fettering the Presidency deprives us of flexibility that may be crucial in some future crisis. President Clinton's ringing defense of Executive prerogatives—though in the service of unworthy causes—may even lead him to go along with the Republicans on repeal.

The GOP should exact its price by prohibiting the delegation of *both* the President's and Congress's war powers to the United Nations. Therein lies the real source of the Clinton debacles. Senator Dole's bill, as well as one that House Republicans are preparing, would ban placing U.S. troops under UN command and insist on stricter accountability in all UN peacekeeping. This is what makes the *New York Times* squeal. But it is no restraint on a sensible President, since no sensible President would lose sight of the American national interest in the first place.

Murder Will Out

JOHN SALVI, the alleged murderer of two abortion-clinic secretaries in Brookline, Massachusetts, will, if convicted, join the ranks of Paul Hill, Michael Griffin, and John Brown. Not John Brown, the sentimental hero of the song and of mediocre poets, but John Brown, the murderer of five slaveowners at Pottawatamie Creek, and the insurrectionist who seized the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry. Brown's last exploit had the same effect on public opinion as the deeds of Salvi, Hill, and Griffin: it enraged and hardened the South, presumably including the American officer who captured Brown, Colonel Robert E. Lee; and it dismayed the North, where Brown's popularity rebounded only after his trial.

Brown's fundamental insight—that slavery was an offense against divine justice—was not original to him; Thomas Jefferson, a slaveholder, had said essentially the same thing. What was original was the course Brown adopted to effect God's will: megalomaniacal, ineffectual, and totally outside the only channels that could bring success to slavery's enemies: the channels of law, politics, and civic discourse which Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans followed to victory the year after Brown's execution. Only when the South refused to abide by the verdict did Lincoln resort to force; pro-life killers, like Brown, lack Lincoln's patience.

The vast majority of the pro-life movement, includ-

MLA Mischief

A COPY of the program of the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, just held in San Diego, has fallen into *NR*'s hands. From a mass of drier papers and themes such as "Embodied Metaphor as a Cognitive Construct: The Cultural Scene as Circle Metaphor in Jane Austen's *Emma*," we have extracted a selection of possible interest to our readers:

Defying the Dic(k)tators from Freud to Fascism: Virginia Woolf and Penis Mockery
Cookies for Mankiller; or How "Feminist" Became the New "F" Word at San Jacinto College
Queer Sexuality: From Tautology to Oxymoron
Undertheorized: Lesbian Cinephilia and Its Objects
Redressing the Female Subject: Transvestite Saints' Lives and the Benedictine Reform
The Survivor's Voice: Father–Daughter Incest and the Contemporary Woman Poet
Homosexual Desire and the Spirit of Capitalism
Unspecific Details: Banishing the Specter of Female Homoeroticism in Nineteenth-Century Anti-Masturbation Writing
Grappling with the Phallus: A Gender Feminist Assessment
Freud's Micturating Penis
Coitus Interruptus and the Pardoner's Voice
So Just When Can You Be a Lesbian in Cyberspace?
Unrepresentable Rape and the Represented Church in Medieval Saints' Lives
Snickering at Incest: The Comedy of Sexual Transgression in Horace Walpole's Early Correspondence
Queer Histories and Deviant Science: Rereading 1940's *Wonder Woman*

Meanwhile down the hall a California professor was censuring Philip Larkin for his interest in erotica . . .

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ing the civil-disobedience wing that blockades abortion clinics, recognizes these distinctions. Randall Terry, the founder of Operation Rescue, now serving a five-month sentence in federal prison, wrote: "Has God authorized one person to be policeman, judge, jury, and executioner? Is it logical to leap from non-violent life-saving activities to lethal force?" That has not prevented the pro-life movement from being assailed as accessories to the Brookline murders, by the same moralists who think nothing of consigning a million and a half fetuses a year to the dumpsters. The Republican Party can partly redeem the debacle, as it redeemed Brown's, by pursuing the pro-life fight to eventual victory through political means.

Murray Rothbard, RIP

MURRAY ROTHBARD, age 68, died on January 7. We extend condolences to his family, but not to the movement he inspired.

The academic and journalistic achievements of Professor Murray Rothbard of the University of Nevada were prodigious—25 books, including *Man, Economy, and State*, and a four-volume history of economic thought, the final two volumes of which will appear in the spring. He was the primary influence in founding the Libertarian Party, whose godfather he continued to be until he broke with it a few years ago.

What reason, then, not to regret the end of his influence on the conservative-libertarian movement?

Murray Rothbard had defective judgment. It pains even to recall it, but in 1959 when Khrushchev arrived in New York, with much of America stunned by the visit of the butcher of Budapest—the Soviet protégé of Stalin who was threatening a world war over Berlin—Rothbard physically applauded Khrushchev in his limousine as it passed by on the street. He gave as his reason for this that, after all, Khrushchev had killed fewer people than General Eisenhower, his host.

Murray couldn't handle moral priorities. In 1991 he decried the Cold War, which had just ended by liberating three hundred million people while maintaining our own independence. As president of the John Randolph Society, he spoke jubilantly at its convention in 1991 of his fancy, that we should "think the unthinkable and restore the good old Articles of Confederation." In recent years he disavowed Milton Friedman on the grounds that in endorsing the idea of school vouchers, Professor Friedman had sold out to the enemy, the State. James Burnham, the noble strategist and philosopher, he attacked bitterly in 1968 ("I can see Burnham now, helping the slavemasters of the South round up the slave rebels under Nat Turner"). In 1957, reviewing in *NR* a book by Murray Rothbard, Henry Hazlitt observed that he suffered from "extreme apriorism." Indeed he did, Rothbard retorted in an essay that defended categorical positions, leaving no room for qualifications however critical. We have not read his economic history, but if it is as reliable as his contemporary history, we warn against it a generation of scholars which, from all appearances, is paying it the attention it deserves. In his speech to the John Randolph Society Rothbard gave this rendition of the history of NATIONAL REVIEW: "And so the purges began. One after another, Buckley and NATIONAL REVIEW purged and excommunicated all the radicals, all the nonrespectables. Consider the roll call: isolationists (such as John T. Flynn), anti-Zionists, libertarians, Ayn Randians, the John Birch Society, and all those who continued, like the early NATIONAL REVIEW, to dare to oppose Martin Luther King and the civil-rights revolution." Anybody who could decipher this magazine's history as above, could also conclude that Khrushchev was morally preferable to Eisenhower.

Murray Rothbard was a wonderfully pleasant social companion. He had been a friend and colleague—he did the research for the passages in *Up from Liberalism* that dealt with economics. But in 1962, at an ISI-sponsored seminar at Yale, I spoke derisively, if with good humor, about Murray's proposal to privatize the lighthouses, suggesting that such a platform would persuade listeners less of the advantages of the private sector than of the disadvantages of knowing nothing about lighthouses. Rothbard was outraged and noisily denounced this journal, vowing never again to contribute to it.

We muddled through without him, and he got on with his own work, though the influence of the Libertarian Party did not correspond with its valuable insights—the American people, during the Cold War, were not going to welcome in large numbers a political party whose leader thought the defense of freedom through containment was a travesty.

It was a great pity, but his problem ought not to be thought of as tracing to the seamless integrity of libertarian principles. In Murray's case, much of what drove him was a contrarian spirit, the deranging scrupulosity that caused him to disdain such as Herbert Hoover, Ronald Reagan, Milton Friedman,

The Real Comeback Kid

Pete Wilson, who had cast a pall
Like Saul before he switched to Paul,
Attacks illegals and those who
Use welfare as they use the loo,
A change that blew Kathleen away
And could, when cherries bloom in May,
Blow such a storm that Gramm grabs Dole
And Baker seeks "a better hole."

W. H. VON DREELE

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and—yes—Newt Gingrich, while huffing and puffing in the little cloister whose walls he labored so strenuously to contract, leaving him, in the end, not as the father of a swelling movement that "rous[ed] the masses from their slumber," as he once stated his ambition, but with about as many disciples as David Koresh had in his little redoubt in Waco. Yes, Murray Rothbard believed in freedom, and yes, David Koresh believed in God. —WFB

Notes & Asides

■ Memo to: WFB
From: McF.

I liked your entry in the anniversary issue of *American Heritage* ("What in your opinion is the most important development of the last years?"). Why not let our readers see it?

Memo to: McF.
From: Bill

Jim, no sooner said than done . . .

I hate to say it, but feel the need to acknowledge the quiet triumph of secularism in the past thirty years. This is not an invitation to admire my sibylline powers, but in fact, I did venture in my first book that it was unreasonable to expect that there wouldn't be consequences from the assault in the university on religious faith. In my day lusty agnostics would on the least invitation happily engage in trench warfare against Christianity. Okay. But it is worse now, or such is my reading. The evangelists of agnosticism no longer feel the need to move their armies against what, in their judgment, is nowadays only a derelict defense force. It isn't that, of course, but the indifference to religion, reflected in the life of the university, is a development of great social consequence. If one listens, for instance as I recently did on the relevant anniversary, to the message by FDR when he communicated to the American people that D-Day had happened and the reconquest of Europe was in prospect, one is starkly reminded of how our leaders then addressed us. "Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor. . . . They will need Thy blessings . . . we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph. . . . Thy will be done, Almighty God." That was common currency from the aristocratic and the ruling classes, in FDR's case conjoined. He spoke language that suggested the ultimate dimension of the human experience, and this was the foundation of American idealism, liberty under God, as we came to phrase it. I cannot imagine a modern President speaking so, even though the incumbent and his predecessors are Christians by formal understanding. What all of it means is that the great regulator of days gone by is no longer vibrant, and the consequences hardly need to be enumerated. In other ages it was all there: crime, libertinism, self-centeredness, infidelity. But it was viewed as departure from the correct standards. Now we get such as the Surgeon General, whose answer to the question Is it wrong to conceive out of wedlock? was "No. Everyone has different moral standards." That would include Pol Pot.

—Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

■ Memo to: WFB
From: Florence King

When the libertarian economist Murray Rothbard died of a heart attack in New York City on January 7, he and I had just met for the first time after several years of penpalship. He and his wife came by for drinks the day after Christmas when they passed through en route to Manhattan.

They wanted to take me out to dinner, but when I explained that as a heavy smoker I felt uncomfortable in all restaurants, Murray delivered a ringing defense of individual rights that sounded just like one of his vigorous columns in *The Free Market*.

We had a delightful cocktail party of three, and the first real conversation I've had for a long time. In retrospect, I suppose he looked a little frail, but everybody I know is an indoor type and a nightowl, so I really didn't register it. He was full of mental energy.

I called him "the midnight faxer." As I write this I have just learned that his letter to me dated January 6, which arrived in the wee hours, was the last thing he ever wrote. It was such a good letter, funny and wonderfully opinionated, just the way he talked. I shall cherish it.

I'm devastated, but at least I finally met him.

■ Dear friends at *NR*:

This item is from page 263 of the 1994 edition of *Webster's New World Dictionary*.

clin-to-nia (klin tō′ nē a) n. [ModL. after De Witt Clinton] any of a genus (*Clintonia*) of hardy plants of the lily family, with white or yellow flowers and blue berries

I'm having trouble finding the appropriate punchline; thought you might want to take a crack at it.

All the best.
Daniel Katz, MD
Pembroke Pines, Fla.

Dear Dr. Katz: Yes, I see your point; I too feel the urge, but there is a metaphorical obstacle I can't vault. Maybe our readers will have an idea. If not we can always try Mrs. Gingrich. Cordially, **—WFB**

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ON THE SCENE

Grant Children

RICH LOWRY

Fred Carlson

WASHINGTON, D.C.

LAWRENCE Smedley, executive director of the National Council of Senior Citizens, held a joint press conference with Senator Chuck Robb (D., Va.) last October to offer his endorsement. Ollie North had just suggested that perhaps Social Security should be voluntary, and Smedley was hitting hard: North's proposal "would undoubtedly bring back to Virginia and the nation old-age poorhouses." The endorsement got good play in the press. An anchor of a Washington-area TV station reported, "Robb made it clear today that he's a true friend of a national senior citizens' group." The event was typical election-year scaremongering on Social Security, with one exception: it might not have been possible without your tax dollars.

In 1993 the National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC) received 96 per cent of its income from the Federal Government; without taxpayers' money, there probably would have been no "national senior citizens' group" to endorse Robb, or do anything else. Since its founding in 1961 to help pass Medicare, the NCSC has received hundreds of millions of dollars from the U.S. Government. The funds go primarily to run a jobs program for the elderly poor and to build and manage housing for senior citizens. But the grants also, at least indirectly, help support political activism. The NCSC has close ties to the labor wing of the Democratic Party and makes no bones about its politics. The group has called the Contract with America an "economic suicide pact," campaigned in favor of the Clinton health-care bill, and identified congressional votes against NAFTA and for a ban on striker replacements as "pro-senior."

For the Left, government money for everything from job training to arcane educational research provides a base for other, more partisan endeavors. "The funding allows them to build up activists," says David Keene of the American Conservative Union. "It gives them some place to sit and put their farm team together." Their adversaries on the Right enjoy no similar advantages; as a matter of principle, the NCSC's conservative counterparts, the Seniors Coalition and United Seniors Association, take no government funding. "Conservatives have to go out and raise all this money," says former Reagan official Don Devine, "while the other guys just walk through the door of a government agency." Keene and Devine are organizing regular meetings of conservative groups to identify the sources of the most egregious government grants; they will then push Congress to turn off the spigots.

This is not a new battle; it was fought before, and lost, during the Reagan Administration. The difference this time is that Republicans control the House. In the 1980s more than one Cabinet secretary was shocked to discover that his department was funding leftist activism, but was prevented from doing anything about it by an appropriations subcommittee chairman with a stake in the status quo. Today, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston (R., La.) says he's anxious to hear the horror stories, and the impending budget squeeze means these programs—all of which fall into the discretionary part of the federal budget—will be almost irresistible targets.

THE trouble is finding them. "The line between the nonprofit sector and the government is so blurred that no one is sure exactly how much money is at stake or how many of these groups are getting funds," says Robert Pambianco of the Capital Research Center. In its *Patterns of Corporate Philanthropy*, Capital Research identifies some of the bigger names. The liberal Hispanic group National Council of La Raza gets about a quarter of its funding from federal grants. The Sierra Club has received money from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy. In 1990 Planned Parenthood got 36 per cent of its budget from government contracts and grants. In 1991 the Urban League got more than half of its budget from government contracts.

But under almost every federal rock crawl smaller creatures few people know about. Consider environmental spending. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation, originally intended to become a private entity, has turned into something of a permanent slush fund for the secretary of the interior; hunting and fishing groups get money from the foundation, and so do groups like the Environmental Defense Fund and the Audubon Society. This year, to pick one grant, the National Park Service gave $248,000 to the William O. Douglas Outdoor Recreation Center in Santa Monica to offer "environmental and multicultural exhibits and activities." The EPA gives grants to state and local governments to encourage volunteer environmental monitors—such as San Francisco Bay Keeper, and Wetlands Watch of Minneapolis—to police their areas for regulatory violations. "It's nearly impossible to find

Mr. Lowry is NR*'s national political reporter.*

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some of these things, even in the agencies' budgets," complains Robert Gordon of the National Wilderness Institute.

The effect of all this is a perpetual-motion machine for government activism. With a boost from federal money, a group like the NCSC or the Urban League agitates for government support of its causes, thereby pulling in more money to help start the cycle again. "It's the government perpetuating itself," says Pambianco. Breaking the cycle promises a double payoff for Republicans: cutting spending and the clout of statist lobbies in one blow.

The Legal Services Corporation, long a bane of conservatives, exemplifies the political stakes. Legal Services gets roughly $400 million a year from the Federal Government. It in turn doles the money out to state and local legal organizations that are supposed to help the indigent but often end up pushing liberal causes. The Reagan and Bush Administrations clamped down on Legal Services through increased monitoring of grantees, but the Clinton Administration has eased the scrutiny. Former officials in the left-wing field organizations that needed watching are now running the show in Washington and appear to have gutted the old oversight mechanisms. "The restrictions against political activity are meaningless without enforcement," explains Ken Boehm, a former counsel to the Legal Services board, now with the National Legal and Policy Center. The new regime makes it even easier for Legal Services–funded operations to sue states over, say, welfare policy. If the Republicans don't get rid of Legal Services, they will be handing responsibility for welfare reform to governors with one hand and giving resources to opponents of reform with the other.

The push to detach left-wing groups from government starts with a rigorous appropriations process in the House. But to sustain it will take two broader changes. First, Republicans will have to be hard-headed about which programs they support.

Under the Contract with America, Republicans plan to eliminate the goo-goo prevention provisions from last year's Omnibus Crime Act. But missing from the rollback is the bill's Violence Against Women Act, the $1.6-billion bipartisan measure that creates a new category of "gender-motivated" violence. Among other things, the act funds federal domestic-violence counselors and a national domestic-violence hotline. It's no secret who'll win the grants to implement such programs. "It's a straight feed to the Left," says Barbara Ledeen of the conservative Independent Women's Forum, which wants the act repealed. The law devotes $700,000 to studying and developing training programs to avoid gender bias in the federal courts. "Who's going to do gender-bias training?" Miss Ledeen asks. "People like me?"

The second, more important change will be shutting down as much of Washington as possible. "Ultimately, that's the only way the problem can be solved," says Constance Horner, a Health and Human Services official in the Bush Administration, "short of transforming the attitude of the entire American elite." When there's not so much money available in Washington, the bureaucrats and interest groups will have less clay to shape to their ends. If the National Council of Senior Citizens wants to run programs for the elderly in between flacking for the Clinton Administration, let it win its grants from the Topeka City Council. Good luck. □

Northern Exposure

DONALD KIRK

SEOUL

THE aftermath of December's helicopter crash in North Korea should give pause to optimists who thought relations between Washington and Pyongyang were warming up. The U.S. helicopter was shot down on December 17 after it accidentally strayed into North Korean air space, and the surviving pilot was not released until nearly two weeks later.

The chilliness evident in this episode suggests that, despite the deal hammered out by negotiators from Washington and Pyongyang last fall, the North is not likely to allow inspection of its nuclear facilities in the forseeable future. Since the agreement does not specify exactly when the North needs to permit inspection, the issue promises to devolve into a long-running war of words.

AMID all the talking, however, the North may open up in quite another way—to a horde of foreign experts and investors looking for ways to exploit a mysterious land of cheap labor and eager consumers. The rush to "get into the North" is reminiscent of the talk about "getting into China" more than two decades ago in the first flush of Nixon/Kissinger ping-pong diplomacy. It will be a long time before Coca-Cola signs light up Pyongyang, but the North is eagerly courting investors from Europe, the United States, Japan, and South Korea.

Just what kind of investment the North will accept is unclear. Those hoping to set up businesses around Pyongyang are likely to wind up on a tour of the free-trade zone in the northeast, hard by the Tumen River border with Russia. Investors also have to worry about restrictions on exporting profits, defaults on loans, and the possibility that the government might close down a facility in a fit of pique.

For South Koreans, the downside is especially daunting. The North, while promising to freeze its nuclear program and eventually tolerate nuclear inspections, has said nothing about reducing the size of its million-man military force, half of which is based within forty miles of the demilitarized zone that divides the Korean peninsula. Yet the rewards for getting into the North appear so rich that South Korean leaders and businessmen believe they are worth the risks.

In November, President Kim Young Sam lifted a ban, imposed at the start of the nuclear crisis two years ago, on visits to the North by South Koreans. South Korea's sprawling conglomerates (*chaebol*) are drafting feasibility studies and rushing to Beijing for planning sessions with North Korean officials, all in the expectation that the North will invite them in in force to study, observe, and prospect.

To be sure, no one is talking about getting rich quick. The latest South Korean guidelines limit investment per

Mr. Kirk is author of Korean Dynasty: Hyundai and Chung Ju Yung, *(published by M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, N.Y.).*

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company to a paltry $3 million a year. Nor can South Korean businessmen actually go beyond the study stage unless the North Koreans condescend to sit down with South Korean negotiators and work out a few formalities. For them as for the South Koreans, the stakes are too high. The North desperately needs the investment, while the South Korean business interests see a bonanza in everything from small factories to a piece of the nuclear agreement's $4-billion energy package, including contracts to build two nuclear reactors.

"If the South Korean government will establish a big picture on economic cooperation with the North, South Korean private companies will proceed," says Lee Jung Sung of Daewoo's planning and coordination office. Of the leading South Korean *chaebol*, Daewoo seems to have the best shot at succeeding in the North. Its chairman, Kim Woo Choong, won North Korean approval for nine factories in Nampo, the west-coast port, when he visited the North three years ago. "It will take time," says Lee, but the North Koreans have already constructed the buildings where Daewoo may some day install equipment for producing luggage, shirts, shoes, toys, kitchen utensils, and textiles.

Other groups have similar goals. Hyundai dreams of opening resort facilities on scenic Mount Keumkang (Diamond Mountain), on the basis of a deal struck by Hyundai founder and honorary Chairman Chung Ju Yung when he journeyed to the North in 1989. Samsung envisions investment in textiles and chemicals for polyester fabric, but it doubts that the North has the infrastructure to support an electronics industry, Samsung's strongest suit. Lucky–Goldstar also sees possibilities in textiles, chemicals, even iron and steel. South Korean businessmen cite three advantages of setting up ventures in the North rather than elsewhere in Southeast Asia: cheap labor, a common language, and geographical proximity (especially if North and South can agree on shipment by land across the demilitarized zone).

Amid the euphoria, businessmen acknowledge a host of problems. "When we evaluated the city of Nampo, we found they were out of electricity, so we have to build a power plant," says Bae Soon Hoon, president of Daewoo Electronics. "And their harbor facilities are very poor, so we could not ship products out of North Korea." Then too, he observes, the North Koreans do not want South Korean managers ordering their people around. "North Korea will manage," he says, even though North Korean managers may have little or no experience—and may not be in any mood to obey expert "advisors" from the South. "With all those things," says Bae, investing in the North "is not very practical."

ADDING to the uncertainty is the question of who's in charge in North Korea. Since the death of "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung in July, his son and heir, Kim Jong Il, has been largely invisible and totally mute. A public appearance at a mass rally one hundred days after his father's death raised more questions than it answered. North Korean TV spliced in shots of Kim between extended sweeps of the crowd to give the impression that "junior Kim," as he is known in the press here, was present for a good chunk of time. In fact, he was probably on hand for only a minute or two. Later, at a ceremony for the building of a tomb for the legendary Tangun, mythic founder of Korea, Kim's face looked like that of a man who had suffered a stroke.

Kim Jong Il's uncle, Kim Yung Ju, has assumed increasing influence in opening up the economy and may be undermining his nephew. The North appears to be keeping Kim Jong Il as a symbolic stand-in for his father, while forming a collective leadership behind him. Turmoil over the next decade seems inevitable.

Despite the doubts, however, the *chaebol* can scarcely disguise their enthusiasm, partly growing out of the potent urge to bring the two Koreas together. "We have a lot of emotional feeling about North Korea," says Bae Soon Hoon. "Definitely North Korea will grow very fast after opening up, maybe faster than other countries."

While waiting for that resurrection day, South Koreans maintain contacts through low-level North–South trade. Samsung, Lucky–Goldstar, Daewoo, and a few lesser *chaebol* send cloth to the North for plants there to turn into finished garments. The North also ships zinc, steel plate, and gold from a mine south of Pyongyang. The goods move on foreign vessels ostensibly bound for China and elsewhere, but which actually go directly between North and South. The trade is a kind of bait: the North reaps a 10-to-1 surplus on commerce of about $200 million a year. South Koreans see the loss as a small sacrifice on the altar of long-term investment.

"Basically, I think business will be expanding in every industrial field," says Yun Dong Sok, general manager of "the NK team" at Lucky–Goldstar. Foreign businessmen agree. The European Union's local chamber of commerce sent a team to the northeast trade zone amid promises to "explore from a European viewpoint." Americans are also eager to invest, but are unsure how as long as Pyongyang remains on Washington's black list under the trading-with-the-enemy act. "We take the lead from both governments," says William Oberlin, vice president of the local American Chamber of Commerce. "Right now everybody's upbeat." □

Two Times Two Germanies

ERIK v. KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

MUNICH

THE European countries are muddling along, suffering the pains of growing together, but also left directionless by the end of the Cold War and weakened by a spiritual malaise. But within this general drift Germany has its own peculiar problems, which derive not only from the Nazis and World War II but before that, as George F. Kennan said so correctly, from the outcome of World War I, the source of all our evils.

Journalists and politicians commenting on last October's elections duly noted that there are still two Germanies. In fact, it would be truer to say that there are two times two Germanies. Not only are there the free Germany of Bonn, fully part of the West, and the former German

Mr. Kuehnelt-Leddihn is NR's longtime Continental correspondent.

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Democratic Republic, a Soviet satellite for 45 years; there is also the prior division between the big southwest, predominantly Catholic and harboring Germany's oldest historic sites, and the northeast, largely Protestant and Prussian in its memories. The old Prussia had its virtues—among them hard work and discipline—but these were deeply undermined by four decades of Marxist collectivism. Only 30 per cent of the children in the East today have been baptized; the work ethic has sunk to a terrible low; and a large share of the people have become so accustomed to the collectivist welfare state that even now, four years after reunification, sizable numbers of them voted for the Party of Democratic Socialism, the successor to the Communist Party.

Although this was still not enough to give the Left a majority in the Bundestag (the lower house of parliament), it was enough to affect the Christian Democratic Union's present behavior and probable future course. Already in two of the new federal states the CDU has had to enter into coalitions with its rival throughout the postwar period, the Social Democratic Party. And now the CDU leadership, with an eye to the future, is casting friendly glances in the direction of the Greens. The calculation is that the liberal Free Democrats might not, at the next election four years from now, manage to clear the 5 per cent threshold, and so the CDU is looking for a potential new coalition partner. Actually, the Green connection is not as farfetched as it might seem. While many Greens are of the radical Left, many others follow a perverted conservatism, dreaming of an Eden-like agrarian world without factories, cars, pollution, and atomic-energy plants.

Even as the reunified Germany reaches a crisis point, so does the European Union, and the place of Germany within it. With over 80 million inhabitants (compared to about 60 million each for France, Italy, and the United Kingdom), Germany is by far the most populous country west of Russia. Amazingly, perhaps, this does not worry the British, Italians, or French as much as it worries the Germans themselves. Partly, this is because bigness within the EU means being expected to take on a number of tasks, and that means financial sacrifices and perhaps even military involvement. But more than that, it reminds Germans that their country really is a *Grossmacht*, a major power, evoking memories of the Third Reich, which they want to forget entirely.

Hence the profound ambivalence about the former Yugoslavia. Germany's first impulse was to side with the breakaway republics against Serb aggression, and Germany did rush to recognize the newly independent Croatia and Slovenia. But when France and Britain declined to take steps to stop the slaughter in Bosnia, the Kohl government went along—prompting the resignation from the cabinet of the CDU's Herr Schwarz-Schilling, a Christian gentleman. And when that wonderful Mr. Karadzic (who surely will someday get the Nobel Peace Prize) denounces Germany, Austria, and the Vatican as the crimi-

D. F. Bach

nals who, in World War II, destroyed the glorious "Yugoslavia," the German Left unanimously agrees that no German soldier should reappear on the Sava or the Drina. Even the question of whether Germany should send its air force to Bosnia in the event that the UN bluehelmets have to be evacuated created a minor storm in the Bonn parliament.

The simple truth is that Germany is a castrated nation. France had a Revolution with sadistic atrocities not matched until this century, and then the Napoleonic armies drowned nearly all of Europe in blood. Yet forty years after Waterloo French armies were again on the march—in Algeria, Spain, Italy, Russia. By contrast, fifty years after the fall of the Third Reich, Germany dares do nothing that would revive the memory of those days.

The only positive element in the German situation today is the deeper understanding with France. The Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl and the Socialist François Mitterrand are on first-name terms. The German Federal Bank has repeatedly saved the franc, and now Mercedes is going to build its gigantic "Swatch-car" plant not in Germany but in French Lorraine.

Underlying all Germany's other problems is the moral problem. The porcification of Germany has made enormous strides. Sex shops blossom even in smaller cities. There is a frightful crisis in the Lutheran Church. And as for the Catholic Church, bishops look the other way when obscene presentations of the Body of Christ are exhibited in their churches (as "great art") and youth organizations distribute eye-popping sex games. Romans 12:2 ("Do not conform to this world") is everywhere forgotten.

Will there be any reaction to all this? Surely there will. But whether it will have a positive or negative character, only time will tell. Some medicines could be worse than the disease, and too many of the doctors prescribing them—Germany's younger cultural and political leaders—are alumni of the student upheavals of 1968.

It is not a good sign that this new Germany has picked as its capital Berlin, once the third largest metropolis in the Turkish empire and practically on the Polish border. Geographically, this would be as if the United States chose to move its capital to a location twenty miles south of Tucson.

Of course, only an extremely thin majority of Bundestag members voted for the move, and then partly as a sop to the East Germans. "But are there not good historical reasons?" a German ignoramus might ask. Certainly not. Germany's troubles really began, not in 1933 or even 1918, but in 1866, when it was decided that Berlin and not Vienna would become the capital of a unified Germany. Berlin was only 74 years the German capital, and in that short period saw four historical cataclysms: the end of the monarchy; the short, turbulent reign of the Weimar Republic; the rise and fall of National Socialism; and finally the occupation by International Socialism. What next? Perhaps there won't be a fifth cataclysm, since Mr. Fukuyama has told us that history has come to an end. But has it? □

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Fewer students are learning what they should in the classroom. They lack basic skills and are ill-equipped to begin their careers. Instead of learning to reason and analyze, they learn to uncritically accept fashionable theories and "politically correct" dogmas, prompting one critic to remark wryly, "It's amazing what you can do to your child for $20,000 a year."

Higher education is big business–spending over $170 billion a year–but increasingly it is producing a shoddy product. Students are routinely crammed into classes of 500 to 1,000. They seldom have any real contact with professors whose main interest is research, not teaching. And so few sections of required courses are offered each semester that it now takes the average student five or even six years to complete a degree. A representative of the American Council of Education admits, "This is a condemnation of higher education. If we were running an automobile plant, we would be out of business."

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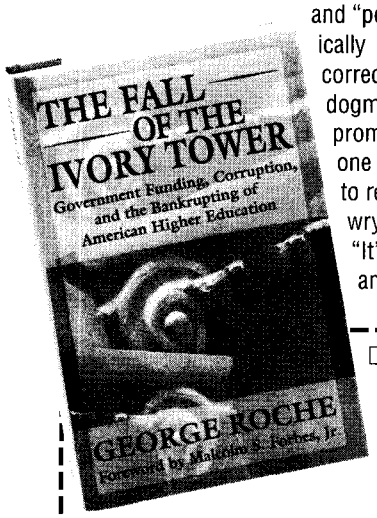
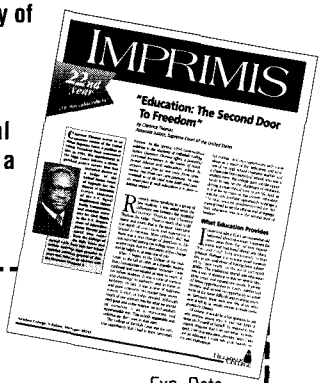

THE FALL OF THE IVORY TOWER
Government Funding, Corruption, and the Bankrupting of American Higher Education
GEORGE ROCHE



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hello

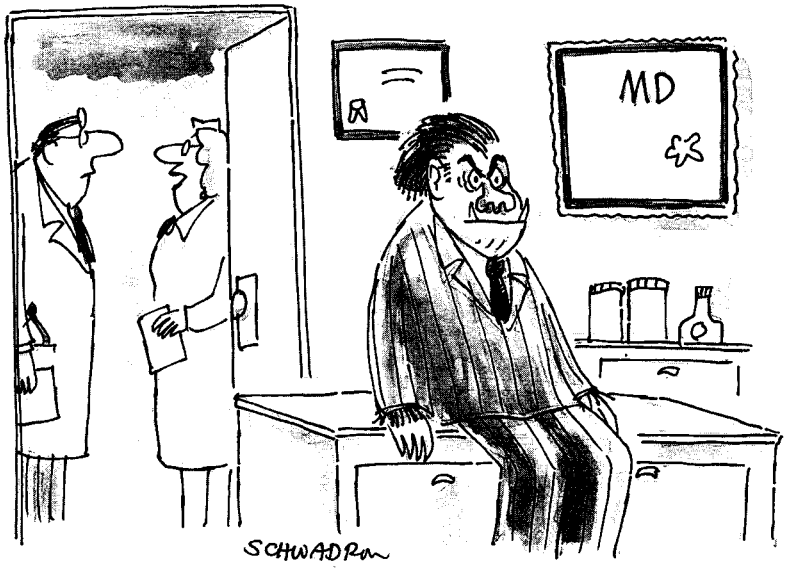
Virtual Me

My telephone's a rotary.
  My laptop is my cat.
I never fax a valentine.
  E-mail ain't how I chat.
I file in April with a stamp.
  No dish peers from my roof.
I never shop on TV, but
  My vodka's 80 proof.

W. H. VON DREELE

"I especially liked that joke you told about giving 10 per cent of your earnings."

"My parents gave me everything I asked for. Why did they hate me so?"



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THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

January 16, 1995

Dear Rusty,

I don't have too much time to write. Tip and I were at Camp David for the weekend, with Bill, Mrs. William J. Clinton, and a few other Cabinet members and their spouses. It's one of Bill's brainstorms: a working weekend retreat led by Tony Robbins.

Tony gives lectures and seminars on "Reaching Your True Power! Potential!" It's a little like Dale Carnegie, except at the end of a Tony Robbins seminar, you have to walk over hot coals. I think Dale just gave everybody a certificate or something.

The first day, Tony led us in some simple yoga stretches. Then, after the paramedics took Secretary Shalala to Bethesda, we started the program. The first thing we did was role-play. Bob Rubin played an Administration official trying to win the vote of a congressman, played by Ron Brown.

"I need your vote, congressman," Bob said.

"Louder! Think POWER!" shouted Tony.

"I need your vote, congressman," he said.

"No," answered Ron.

"Louder! Don't give him your vote!" shouted Tony.

"I want the vote," Bob said forcefully.

"Absolutely not!" Ron said.

"I'll give you ten grand," Bob said in a low voice.

"Okey doke," Ron said cheerfully.

We all applauded Bob's Power! as Tony beamed. Ron raised his hand. "Tony?" he asked. "Don't you think Bob should give me the ten thousand?"

"Well, Mr. Secretary, we were just role-playing."

"Yeah, I know, but I mean, for the realism? Don't you think?" It was an awkward moment.

We did some more simple stretches, which were difficult for Mrs. William J. Clinton due to her bustle. She excused herself to prepare the tea.

Next came "Power! Sharing," in which we all had to share something vulnerable about ourselves. Janet Reno shared how unhappy she was growing up in the Everglades. "I was the tallest structure for miles," she sobbed. "The kids made me wear a tinfoil hat whenever they wanted to listen to Radio Free Europe."

"Try being short!" blubbered Bob Reich. "Do you know what it's like to have some wise guy grab you and demand three wishes and a pot of gold?"

"Shut up, Bob. I would've killed to be short," Bill said. "How'd you like to be the fattest kid in the state? I mean, literally the fattest kid in the state—I have the blue ribbon from the state fair to prove it."

I cleared my throat. I felt it was time for me to share. "Boy," I said sadly, "was I ever a neatnik."

Right then, we broke for lunch. During lunch, Tony delivered a lecture, and I noticed Tipper taking copious notes. After the lecture, she peppered Tony with questions.

"What if someone stands in your way?" she asked.

"Use your Power! to move them aside."

"What if that person is protected by Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution?"

"A piece of paper against your Power! is no contest." Tipper seemed energized by this information.

"You want to know why you failed on health care?" Tony asked, late in the afternoon. "Because you didn't visualize! You have to create an image in your mind of the perfect health care bill, and then you have to see yourself getting it passed!"

"I thought we did that," Bill said.

"You didn't visualize hard enough," Tony said. "Bob Reich, how tall are you?" Tony shouted, suddenly.

"Um . . . . four foot nine, thereabouts."

Tony shook his head, then shouted even louder: "I said, BOB REICH, HOW TALL ARE YOU?!"

"I'm . . . . I'm . . . " Bob sputtered. Suddenly, his expression changed. "I'm six feet tall, Tony. And I've got the Power!"

"Right on!" shouted Tony.

"And I'm average to petite!" bellowed Janet Reno.

"Right on!" answered Tony, pumping his fist.

"And I don't have a weight problem!" said Bill.

"Well, let's not go crazy here," Tony said.

Later, we all had to walk across hot coals. We were supposed to imagine that the coals represented the next two years, and saunter across them just as we would all saunter into 1996.

Bob Rubin sustained second-degree burns on the bottoms of his feet. Bob Reich's hair frizzled in the heat. Mrs. William J. Clinton did okay, except her parasol almost caught fire. Ron Brown begged off, complaining suddenly of "a twisted ankle." I did all right, mostly because I followed Bill, who cheated by strapping two foot-long Kosher hot dogs to his feet. The only person who made it without a hitch was Tipper. She took her time, planned each step, and at the end, turned and smiled at me.

"See?" she said. "We're going to be okay."

Tony said she was the best pupil he had ever had. I couldn't be prouder.

Your pal, Al

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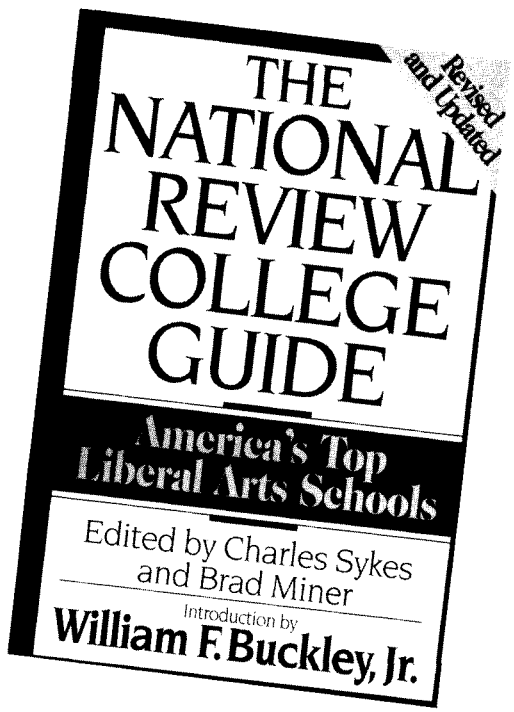
Before You Invest $100,000 in a College Education, You Must Have This Book.



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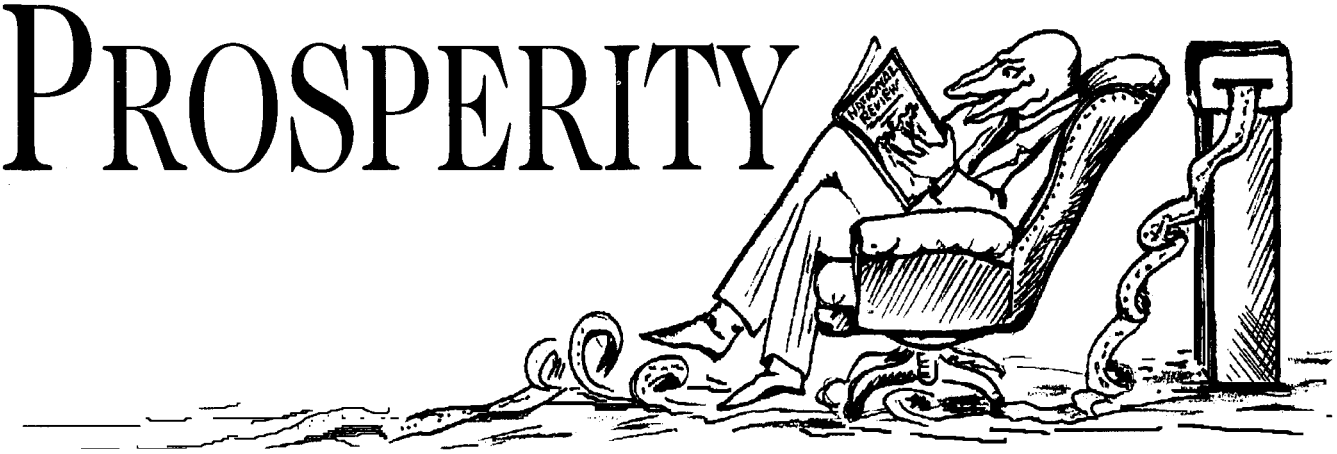
GEKKO'S GUIDE TO PROSPERITY



Will the 104th Congress Produce a Bull Market?

LAWRENCE KUDLOW

GIVEN ALL the talk about the need for real political change, it's remarkable how few people recognize it when it finally occurs. Wall Street, taking its cue from the Federal Reserve, continues to fret that moderate economic growth will reignite inflation, missing the bigger Washington picture. Most business and financial journalists, usually more insightful than the general news reporters, believe that despite November 8, it will remain business as usual in Washington.

The evening-news anchors have adopted the Democratic mantra crafted by White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt: The Contract with America is a repeat of Reaganomics (as if the longest peacetime expansion in history were a bad thing), with tax cuts for the rich, more defense spending, and big deficits.

Yet significant social and economic policy change is occurring not only in Washington but across the country. Capital punishment and the death penalty have re-emerged as crime-fighters. Vouchers and school choice have moved to the head of the class for education reform. Workfare and eligibility limits to ameliorate welfare dependency are cropping up everywhere. Affirmative-action quotas are under assault in the workplace. Victimization pleas are increasingly unfashionable.

Spiritually based self-help books stand atop the best-seller list, including the extraordinary treatise written by the Pope. Religious worship is increasingly popular, and small reading groups are popping up everywhere to study C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, Malcolm Muggeridge, and the Old and New Testaments.

What does all this have to do with the stock market? Plenty. As the right kind of change percolates upward from the grass roots, carrying with it the message that middle-class families and their small businesses are the

Mr. Kudlow is NR*'s economics editor.*

Gekko's Gurus

We're going to see a revolution in American politics. Special-interest groups and lobbyists will be swept aside by Newt Gingrich's remarkable power in the House. The bulk of the Contract will become legislation. If welfare reform is included the Republicans will solidify their hold on Congress for twenty years. If budget outlays are cut, along with tax rates, in such a way as to actually bring the deficit down without phony accounting, then existing interest-rate premiums will come down. This will power a continuing investment boom, improving real wages and productivity, thereby helping middle-class working families, further bolstering the GOP.

—***Mort Zuckerman***, New York Daily News

Three million new consumers and producers in formerly Communist and emerging nations can provide a dynamic source of growth, entrepreneurship, and savings if they are smoothly integrated into the global market system, and if nationalistic reactions to competition from them can be averted.

—***Robert D. Hormats***, *Goldman Sachs (International)*

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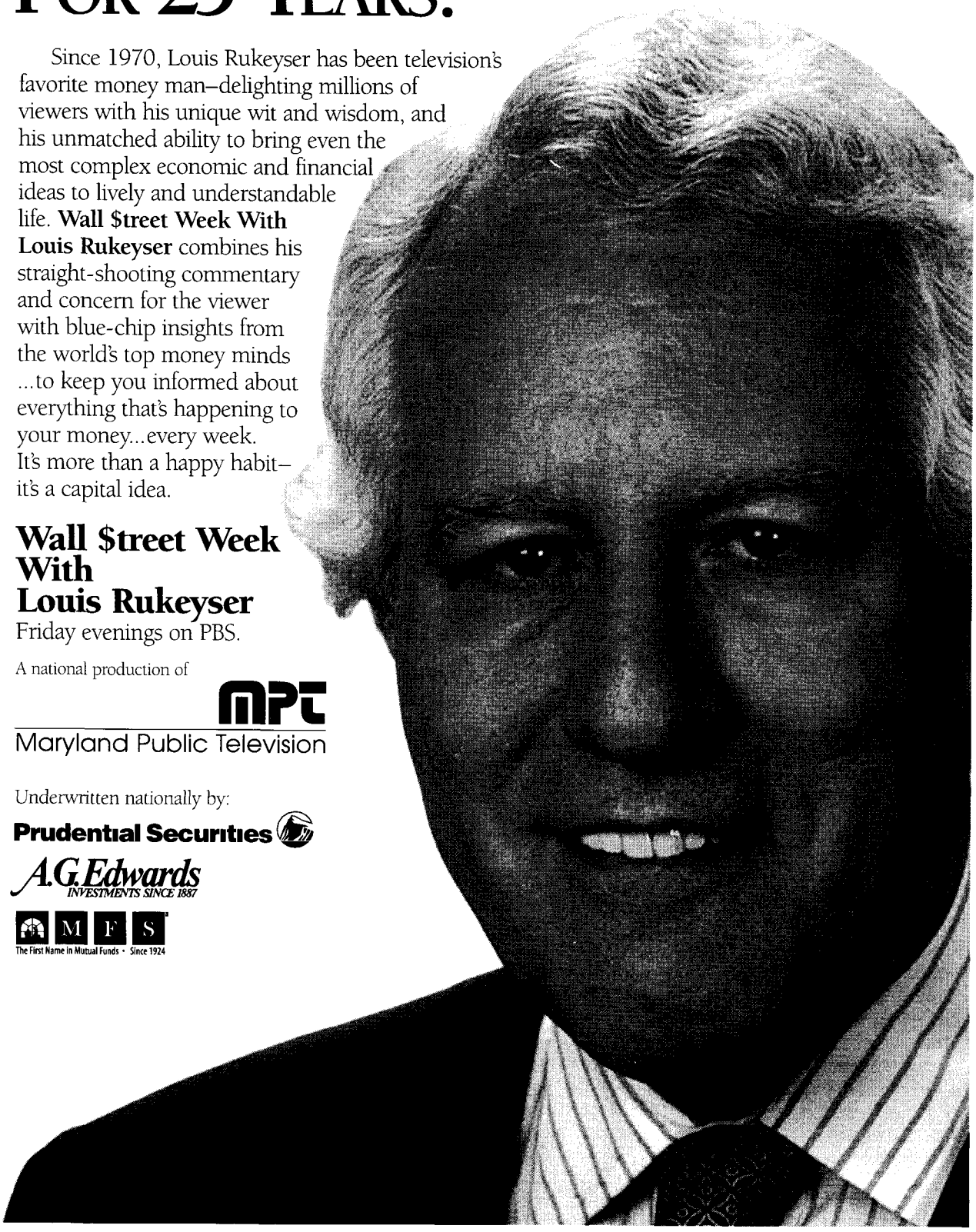

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backbone of America, that spiritual faith is the glue that holds both together, and that people will spend their own money more wisely than government does, policies in Washington are about to undergo the most significant change since the 1930s.

Government bureaucracy is out; the private marketplace is in. Keynesian fiscal fine-tuning is out; Schumpeter's entrepreneurship, innovation, and risk taking are in. Federal mandates are out; states' rights are in. This movement began in the Reagan Eighties but was interrupted during the dreary Bush–Clinton period. Now it is re-energized and re-staffed and ready to roll into the twenty-first century.

The 104th Congress has already begun to implement the new agenda. It is an agenda based on traditional Western values. It is a growth and opportunity agenda. It is a free-market agenda. It is a *bullish* agenda.

On the first night of the new Congress, the House ruled out tax increases, created honest procedures for budget scorekeeping, opened the way for a major reduction in domestic discretionary spending, and set the stage for a balanced budget.

While a chorus of naysayers continued to chant that the GOP is afraid to touch entitlements, Speaker Gingrich appeared before the first Ways and Means Committee hearing chaired by Bill Archer (R., Tex.) to say that Medicare is "a large, clunky, inefficient government system." He urged the panel to design a Medicare program "which gives senior citizens greater choice of better health care at lower cost." Meanwhile, both Medicaid and welfare will come under the budget-cutting microscope, and an emerging GOP consensus of governors, senators, and House members favors restrictions on eligibility and funding.

If my hunch is right, even the untouchable Social Security system, the great symbol of the New Deal, will be significantly privatized during the next ten years. With more than fifty million Americans invested in the stock market through mutual funds and brokerage accounts, enough voters will finally realize how wasteful it is to turn over 15 per cent of their earnings to Uncle Sam for a return of

Is the Contract Good Economics? A Scorecard

1. *Reducing the Tax on Personal Savings.* Score a hit for the Contract. It proposes permitting individuals to exclude 50 per cent of capital gains from their taxable income, in effect reducing the tax rate on capital gains to 15 per cent. Another provision of the Contract would introduce an expanded IRA—an IRA that could be tapped before retirement, with taxation of the interest or dividends not merely deferred but abolished.

Both these provisions will raise the after-tax rate of return on savings and investment and therefore the incentive to save and invest. This would increase the supply of credit to the financial markets, which would, *ceteris paribus*, reduce real interest rates.

2. *Equalizing Tax Rates.* The Contract struck out by not proposing a flat rate of personal taxation. Income taxes would affect all households (and thereby their savings) to the same degree if all households saved at the same rate. But they don't. The fraction of income saved rises as income rises. Therefore, taxes collected from higher incomes fall more heavily on saving than do those collected from lower incomes. Higher income taxes directed at the "rich" reduce the level of personal savings—and thus the good effects on the economy discussed above—by a disproportionate amount.

3. *Lowering Personal Income Taxation.* The Contract struck out again with its provision for tax credits for taxpayers with dependent children. This provision may be attractive politically in the short run, but it is poor economic policy. Not all taxpayers have dependent children; therefore, there is a clear shifting of the tax burden from one taxpayer group to another group. And families at the low end of the income scale do not pay taxes anyway, while families at the high end of the income scale do not qualify for the credit. This credit therefore shifts the tax burden even within the category of taxpayers that may be construed as "families."

4. *Reducing the Tax on Business.* Score a hit for the Contract's proposal for a neutral cost recovery system, which would reduce the cost of capital by increasing the value of investment depreciation to the full value of the original investment.

This and other reductions of corporate taxes are often challenged by critics such as Minority Leader Richard Gephardt as benefiting corporations at the expense of the ordinary working man and woman. In fact, when each worker has better and more capital to work with, labor productivity improves. This makes labor's input more valuable and therefore, over time, raises the real standard of living of the worker.

5. *Reducing the Tax on Labor.* Score a fielder's choice. The Contract proposes a reversal of recent trends, but it does not go nearly far enough. It proposes to help the working elderly by raising the limit on the earnings of Social Security recipients and repealing the Clinton tax hike on Social Security benefits.

But the Contract does nothing directly about the overall rate of payroll taxes (the taxes, earmarked for Social Security and Medicare, that are imposed on wages and tips). High payroll taxes drive a wedge between the cost of labor to the employer and the wages received by the employee. That is, they make labor more expensive for the employer, thus reducing the quantity of labor demanded, while at the same time reducing the after-tax earnings of employees, thus reducing the supply of labor.

6. *Balancing the Budget.* Bringing federal spending and revenues into line looks like a good thing. But what is being brought into line with what? Is spending to be reduced to match revenues, or are revenues to be increased to meet spending? Which of the various versions of the balanced-budget amendment is eventually put forth will determine whether this is a hit or a double play. —JOHN SILVIA

Mr. Silvia is chief economist at Kemper Financial Services.

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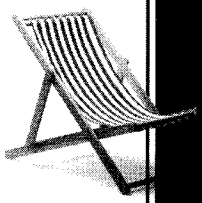

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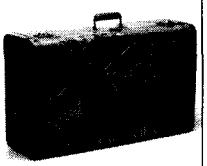

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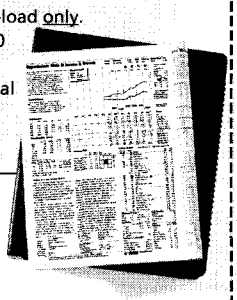

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less than 1 per cent a year, given that John Templeton, the Fidelity Magellan Fund, and a host of other investment managers have generated annual returns of 15 per cent or better for more than thirty years.

Downplaying the coming changes, the *Washington Post* reported that the House Republicans were giving up on the tax-limitation version of the balanced-budget amendment. It isn't true. Assuming a few liberal GOP defections, but with 52 House Democratic votes in favor of the three-fifths supermajority rule for raising income-tax rates, Gingrich is about 15 votes short of the requisite two-thirds. But approval is within reach, and there is no leadership backsliding yet. Similarly for the rumor that the zero-deficit target has been abandoned. House Budget Chairman John Kasich assures me that "the downward glide path toward zero over five years is still in place. Then it moves to zero by 2002, the seventh year. I'd quit before abandoning the zero-deficit target."

On the spending side, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Livingston (R., La.) has decided not to wait until fiscal year 1996 to make cuts. Instead, he has crafted a strategy to rescind about $10 billion of appropriated but unspent funds in FY 1995, yielding a lower expense level from which to cut another $40 to $50 billion from domestic discretionary accounts in FY 1996. "Next year is a whole new ballgame," Livingston says. "The President can veto rescissions, but he cannot veto a zero. And we are going to eliminate as many programs as possible, putting up plenty of zeros."

Alan Greenspan's fight against inflation should result in cooling consumer demand, triggering a slowdown in four areas: autos, inventories, housing, and housing-related durables such as appliances and furniture. With the profit growth of cyclical firms slowing down, growth stocks in areas such as technology, entertainment, health care, and consumer brands are likely to outperform the overall stock market.

What could go wrong? The great new wave in Washington could cut taxes more than it cuts spending and set back the fight against the budget deficit. So both Alan Greenspan and Newt Gingrich will have a lot to say about the outlook for markets in 1995. —***Donald B. Marron***, *PaineWebber*

The long-run prospects for the U.S. economy are good. The likelihood of future tax-rate cuts, however, will slow the economy now. The dramatic slowdown of the U.S. economy during the early 1980s was due to Reagan's tax cut that began on January 1, 1983. The U.S. economy did not take off until the tax-rate reduction actually took effect.

The Laffer-Canto Conditional Forecasts estimate GDP for 1995 to grow at 1.75 per cent in real terms. With rising interest rates, declining corporate profits, and higher inflation expectations, the forecast suggests that there is a 1 in 3 chance that the stock market will decline 10 per cent in nominal terms.

—***Victor Canto***, *Laffer-Canto Associates*

Sweeping deregulation is another key part of the new economic policy. President Clinton has already said he will not sign a 100-day moratorium on new regulations, but the House will pass one anyway in early February. Then, working through the new Government Reform Committee (a restructured Government Operations Committee with new powers over the Commerce and Labor Departments), the GOP intends to pass legislation that requires risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis for new and existing regulations, allows citizens to challenge unfair regulations, and establishes a regulatory budget.

The man behind the deregulatory push is Representative Tom DeLay (R., Tex.), the new House majority whip. A former Houston entrepreneur who built a successful pest-control business, DeLay spent six years pulling together an unofficial $500-billion-a-year tally of federal regulatory costs. Now he is training his sights on the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Clean Air and Water Acts, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. "It's what got me into politics," he says. "It's what I'm here for."

The final piece of the new economic policy is a series of tax cuts to boost high-risk capital investment, liberalize corporate depreciation allowances, and provide relief for middle-class families. The Gingrich Contract also calls for expanded IRAs, a rollback of the Social Security benefits tax, and elimination of the goofy marriage penalty set up by the 1993 tax-hike bill. All of these measures are favorable to growth and capital formation. Only the $500 child tax credit is misdirected. It would have a greater impact on marginal rates if it were turned into a personal allowance or deduction, as recommended by Senate Majority Leader Phil Gramm.

Much more will be done in the tax area during the next Congress, beginning in 1997, if the GOP majority is re-elected. In general, the party wants to provide greater incentives for saving, investment, capital formation, and work effort by reducing marginal tax penalties to the lowest possible levels. Along with accounting simplification and base broadening, Dick Armey's 17 per cent flat tax will get a

The economy is fast approaching crippling constraints on the supply of human capital, entrepreneurship, and savings. Rising tax rates, shrinking deductions, and extravagant transfer payments have slowed the number of new job seekers to half the 1983–89 pace.

Americans and foreigners alike have been investing abroad, and key industries are running short of capacity. Congressional plans for IRAs, realistic depreciation, and capital-gains tax cuts would greatly improve incentives to save, and to invest those savings in the United States. But those who drop out of the labor force have no salaries to save. Unless the punitive 1993 marginal tax rates are rolled back, the economy will run up against a wall within a year. —***Alan Reynolds***, *Hudson Institute*

Republicans also should be wary of claiming victory if the tax cuts in the Contract are approved. While all desirable, they are modest and by themselves unlikely to stop a gradual weakening of the economy. Clinton most assuredly will blame any bad news on the Contract, and GOPers must begin arguing now that the Contract is just a first step on the long road to recovering from the economic folly of the Bush/Clinton years. —***Dan Mitchell***, *Heritage Foundation*

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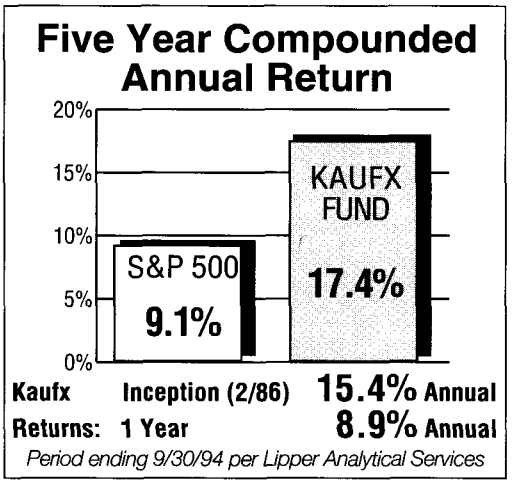

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By August Congress will have passed—and Clinton will have signed into law—capital-gains tax indexing, liberalized capital depreciation allowances, and expanded IRAs, but alas none of these measures will provide sufficient stimulus to jump-start the economy. The year then ends with Clinton blaming the failing economy on the abandonment of Clintonomics. ***—Stephen Moore****, CATO Institute*

The capital-gains tax cut will boost growth this year; new business creation started surging immediately after the Republican victory in November. Given the close correlation between new business formation and job growth, this means Gingrich and Co. alone may be responsible for an additional 1.6 million new jobs by summer. ***—Michelle Colley Laughlin****, Sanwa Securities*

strong hearing, as will the Nunn–Domenici consumption-tax proposal. Down the line, when the GOP turns to Social Security reform, it will need to focus on reducing the FICA payroll tax, the most formidable barrier to job and small-business creation.

The proposed tax cuts, especially the 50 per cent capital-gains exclusion with inflation indexing thereafter, would certainly boost the economy's long-run potential to grow. Today's unindexed 28 per cent nominal capital-gains tax rate turns into a 56 per cent effective tax rate, given a 3 per cent inflation rate and a 3 per cent real return. Under the Gingrich proposal, this would drop to 20 per cent. Instead of keeping 44 cents on the real dollar gained, investors would keep 80 cents. For someone in the 15 per cent tax bracket, the plan would allow 92.5 cents to be retained.

If the Republican economic plan boosts long-term growth back to its 3 per cent historical rate, tax collections by the year 2002 would be $85 billion higher than the Congressional Budget Office now predicts, and spending would be $35 billion lower, meaning a $120-billion reduction in the deficit. Furthermore, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recently argued that the government's consumer price index exaggerates inflation by 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent annually. Correcting this problem could reduce federal spending on Social Security and other pensions by $150 billion over five years.

Pro-growth policies will render the existing stock of money less, not more, inflationary. Efforts to shrink government, deregulate business, and improve incentives will increase the output of goods and services, so the same amount of money will be chasing more goods, thereby reducing the inflation rate. Since the November elections the price of gold has dropped to around $375, not far from the $350 or so that implies price stability. With higher expected economic returns, the U.S. dollar exchange rate has started to recover. Even long-term bond yields in the Treasury market have declined a bit.

In 1995 the stock market and economy may face an interest-rate wall, slowing growth to a trickle, perhaps raising inflation for a while, and pushing down share prices. But this need only be a temporary obstacle. The dramatic changes in fiscal policy scheduled for enactment by the new Congress—combined with the rise of cultural conservatism and traditional values among the citizenry—amount to a powerful prescription for twenty-first-century America: strong, competitive, productive, and responsible.

In the twentieth century, often called the American century, the Dow Jones stock-market index, a good proxy for wealth creation and social progress, started at 70.4 on January 2, 1901. Today it stands above 3800, a 5,474 per cent gain. Why can't the twenty-first century be ours as well? At that rate, the stock market in a hundred years would reach a Dow Jones level of 211,073. Think of it. Buy America. □

Municipal Mysteries

JOE MYSAK

THE MUNICIPAL bond market was already having a bad year when Orange County declared bankruptcy. Interest rates were up, and bond issuance was down—and as with any of the securities markets, volume drives business.

Then came Orange County, and with it I remembered a line in a letter from a friend: One wave washes all away. Whatever else happened in the $1.2-trillion municipal market during 1994—and there was a lot, believe it or not—was gone. All those steps toward introducing better disclosure, making prices apparent and available to buyers, and improving the ethics of the business—gone. One wave washes all away. In the public mind, 1994 became the year of Orange County.

It happened so suddenly. On December 1, a Thursday, the county announced that it was going to experience $1.5 billion in losses in its investment portfolio and was taking steps to remedy the situation. On the following Tuesday, December 6, it filed for Chapter 9 protection from creditors, saying its losses were now more than $2 billion. Mr. and Mrs. America, meet the municipal bond market.

No market suffers more from what pop psychologists once called an identity crisis. The average reporter can probably explain collateralized mortgage obligations more understandably to his readers than he can explain the municipal bond market. The average reporter probably knows more about the market for Hummel figurines than he knows about how his city's bond issue was priced.

Still, the municipal market enters 1995 poised to catch up with its sister markets. It lacks only a visionary executive or two to wrestle it from the swamp where it has lived ever since the federal income tax was instituted in 1913, which can be said to have created the modern, i.e., tax-exempt, municipal bond market. Not even Orange County (or the New Denver airport) can keep it down.

The municipal market is vast in scope, unwieldy in its structures, nearly impenetrable in its nature, and

Mr. Mysak is editor of Grant's Municipal Bond Observer.

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surprisingly inactive. More than 10,000 separate offerings are sold each year, totaling between $100 billion and $200 billion, in a market that is national in principle but decidedly local in practice. This is why, when I launched *Grant's Municipal Bond Observer* last June, I entitled the first article "Into the Heart of Darkness." And when Jim Grant asked me what the publication would endeavor to tell its readers, I remembered what Tom Wolfe said *The Right Stuff* was about: the secret life of the astronauts. "The secret life of the municipal market," I told him.

This is all about to change, and it is going to change sooner rather than later. It has been 183 years since the first municipal bond was sold (by New York in 1812, for a canal). This year, for the first time ever, the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board, a quasi-governmental regulator, is going to release daily data on activity and price movement in the market. Nothing will bring municipals more swiftly into the modern age, or at least the twentieth century.

In the beginning, to be sure, the information will be sketchy. The first thing to be tracked will be the inter-dealer, or wholesale, market. But once unleashed, the power of this idea will prove irresistible. It will be the wave that washes all away.

Right now, the municipal market functions, as Arthur Levitt Jr., chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, has put it, like an Oriental bazaar. It operates in strictly over-the-counter fashion. This means, in practice, that it operates shrouded in mystery. Its handmaidens are salesmen; the true initiates underwrite and trade. A group of high priests—bankers whose specialty is public finance—bring in the deals.

You may have read that the municipal market is dominated by detail, that individuals hold more than three-quarters of the municipals sold. This may be true technically, in terms of who ultimately reports to the IRS that they have received tax-exempt income, but it is misleading. The market is, in fact, dominated by large institutions. The buyers and sellers who account for 80 per cent of the daily activity in the municipal bond market could be easily accommodated in the barroom at 21.

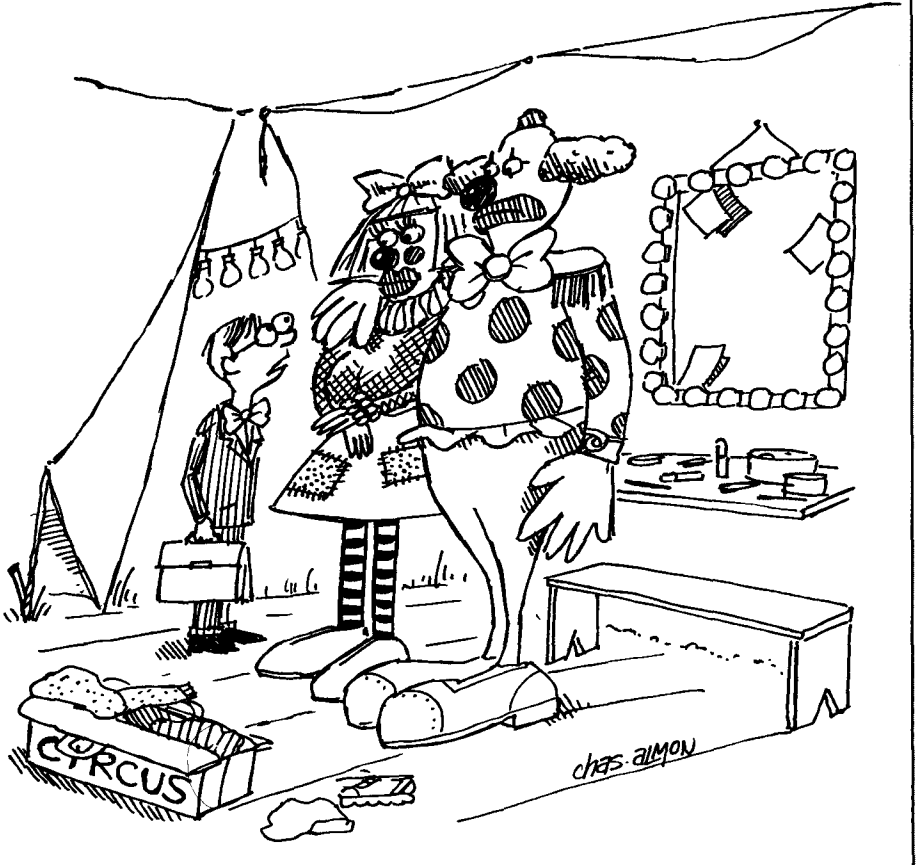
This market—the municipal institutional market, the professional market—is the one covered in the press: or rather the tiny segment of the press that covers it at all. A tiny group of journalists, of whom I helped train not a small number, speak to that tiny group of professionals, and this is what appears in the press. This is the primary reason why many people think the municipal bond market has been doing "lousy" the past year. The same small group of underwriters who are sources for our journalists sell to the institutions. And what have those institutions, which generally represent big mutual-fund families, been doing for most of the past year? They've been selling bonds they

Buy America. Buy her neighbors. Buy the world. The next decade or two will witness a global boom of unprecedented proportions. There will be the usual setbacks and detours. No road or path or information superhighway is ever a straight line. But the U.S. is starting to show the world how to scale back the opportunity-suffocating welfare state. Even congressional Democrats realize the allure of a low-rate flat tax. It won't be long before the economist's equivalent of the four-letter-word—gold—is at mainstream center as a means of lowering interest rates. Homeowners will then get something we haven't seen since the early 1960s—a 4½ per cent fixed-rate, 30-year mortgage.

—***Malcolm S. Forbes Jr.***, Forbes Magazine

We can expect a revival of the "soft landing" thesis—the idea that the economy will slow modestly while avoiding a recession and with inflation held in check. But the landing will probably be harder than that. We expect economic growth to slow to about zero during 1996, and annual inflation to rise to a peak of 4 to 5 per cent, triggered by the recent rise in interest rates engineered by the Federal Reserve. If the right fiscal reforms are passed by Congress, they will help over time; unfortunately, as we saw in 1981–82, they are unlikely to prevent a temporary economic slowdown.

—***Lewis Lehrman & John Mueller***, *Lehrman, Bell, Mueller, Cannon*



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bought in 1993, when interest rates were at two-decade lows. They were selling, not buying, what the underwriters were offering, so the market was "bad." In fact, the tax-exempt municipal market broke in late October, when the yields on tax-exempt bonds became very favorable compared to the yields on taxable bonds. Retail investors should have been told to buy; instead, they kept reading about how "bad" the market was, for almost another month.

This will all change, of course, when the MSRB starts disseminating information about "the market" and journalists start reporting for their readers, rather than for a very insulated group of professionals. In doing that reporting, they will discover a class of securities that is certainly as satisfying, journalistically, as the corporate market. It is also remarkably safe. Sure, there will be stories about Orange County's managers and other disasters, but in general, as the bond-rating agency Moody's Investors Service found in a recent survey of 1,450 issuers, municipal finance officers act prudently. They do not, as a rule, do what Orange County's managers did: borrow money to speculate on interest rates.

None of this is to say that the municipal market will become as active as the stock market. For one thing, there is a learning curve. The municipal market's secret life will remain secret for a while yet. For another, the cost of entry is relatively high. Investors can enter the stock market for a few hundred dollars. The municipal market—I am talking about the actual bonds and notes in it, not the packaged products like mutual funds—really doesn't want to know anyone with less than $10,000 to spend. Finally, municipal securities are, generally speaking, a long-term play. When investors think about them at all, they think about them in terms of their nest eggs, and nest eggs are not used for speculation. Nevertheless, the municipal market is an attractive one. On an after-tax basis it has outperformed the stock market, although this is largely unknown because of the almost relentless disinformation campaign waged by stockbrokers and the equity-oriented press.

What's ahead for the municipal market in 1995? Sodbusting in the last frontier. □

What Every Shareholder Should Know

ROGER HERTOG

PROBABLY the biggest change in the U.S. capital markets during the past decade or two has been their democratization. Nearly everyone is an investor now—and not just in money funds and CDs. The easy availability of mutual funds has meshed in recent years with a long decline in interest rates, prompting many who had never taken investment risk to transfer large sums into stocks and bonds to maximize their yields. The rise of the 401(k) plan, with its varied stock- and bond-fund offerings, has further fueled the trend.

Nor have the new investors been sorry—until recently, at least. The stock market compounded at 15.5 per cent a year between 1980 and 1993, the bond market at more than 11 per cent, and people poured more money in. By 1994 stock funds had ballooned to 21 times their 1981 size. Bond funds were 78 times as large. In the last three years alone, twice as much money has poured into equity mutual funds as was invested in them over their entire 51-year prior history.

On the face of it, the trend has been a wise one. When it comes to building wealth over time, the best record by far among financial assets belongs to stocks. The longer the time frame, the more frequently stocks have been the best-performing asset, but even over periods as short as five years, stocks have won nearly three-quarters of the time since 1926. (Throughout this article I draw on the capital-markets analysis of Ibbotson Associates in Chicago.) Bonds, too, have earned appreciable real returns since the fixed-income markets were deregulated in the Seventies, while money funds and CDs do little better than track inflation and tend to actually lose purchasing power after taxes.

Indeed, if there has been a flaw in the average citizen's traditional atti-

Mr. Hertog is president of Sanford C. Bernstein & Co.

Over the next year a growing minority is going to come to the conclusion that Bill Clinton is a flake, but so is Newt Gingrich. Both believe that the duty of a statesman is to be in perpetual motion, usually in front of a camera. They believe that audacity is best displayed in impudence, that tawdriness is what Americans want, and that we can back off on campaign promises with impunity because people love us.

Bill is seeing New Age gurus for a charisma boost. Newt is lauding Ron Dellums for "the great work Ron has done to extend freedom across the planet." One of his congressional allies invited a team of quacks into the chambers of the House Budget Committee to incite creative thought on budget cuts by shooting "nerf balls." Newt, America is supposed to laugh with *us!*

—***R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr.,*** The American Spectator

Keynesian economists at the Federal Reserve remain stuck in a 1970's time warp in which jobs, growth, and prosperity are the causes of inflation. But loose money is the real problem, not economic growth. Forward-looking inflation warning signals such as gold and the dollar exchange rate continue to suggest higher future inflation; hence the Fed must take additional restraining actions this year, perhaps bringing short-term rates up by another 2 percentage points.

Longer term there is a tremendous window of opportunity to reposition monetary and fiscal policies in a very constructive way. The new GOP Congress will shrink government, cut taxes, and deregulate the economy. This will make money more valuable. It all bodes well for America's future.

—***Wayne Angell, John Ryding,*** *Bear, Stearns*

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tude toward investing, it has been too much risk aversion. "We only take chances on things we know are a given," one woman recently told the *Wall Street Journal*. Then again, there is something to be said for this view. The truth is, financial markets are not so benign as they've looked in recent years. Any experienced investor will attest that you pay for long-term profitability in terms of volatility along the way, and sometimes that volatility is agonizing.

Think back no further than the crash of October 1987—if you remember it. A portfolio of $100,000 on Labor Day was worth $70,500 by Thanksgiving.

Nor is October 1987 the worst a stock investor can experience. Far more unpleasant was the bear market of 1973–74. Stocks went down 43 per cent in those two years combined: a $100,000 beginning investment was worth $57,000 at the end. Do you—like me—remember what it felt like? Market prices declined 2.8 per cent a month, on average, for 21 months. There were two months in which the market slumped by more than 11 per cent. What did *you* do? If you weren't yet investing, what do you *think* you'd have done?

And there's worse yet to be aware of. Sometimes, as in the mid Sixties and late Seventies, stocks seem to lose even their long-term ability to generate wealth. Standard & Poor's 500-stock index returned only 3.9 per cent a year during 1966–77, lagging inflation and T-bills by almost 2 percentage points a year compounded. For 1965–74 the index compounded at only 1.2 per cent a year. The market was down a cumulative 16 per cent for 1969–74—and all these figures include dividends.

It would indeed be ironic if the next reversal were to occur just as the average citizen is most in touch with the long-term advantage of stocks and bonds. Will his attitude survive the bear market to come? Human nature suggests not. One of the strongest determinants of capital-market behavior is the deep fear of loss that most people exhibit—our propensity to feel the pain of loss far more sharply than the pleasure of gain. Which would you choose: an 80 per cent chance of winning $100,000, or an outright gift of $70,000? The former has the greater expected monetary value, but few of us select it; most choose the sure thing. Today's romance with intrinsically volatile assets flies in the face of human nature.

The current results are already coming in where fixed-income investing is concerned. Interest rates finally began to rise in 1994—and with a vengeance, causing the first losing year for the bond market in a quarter-century. The real sucking sound of the past year has been money being vacuumed out of bond funds and redomiciled in the money markets. Withdrawals from stock funds have been slower to develop, but the stock market has yet to really show what it can do. How will *you* react when stocks take their next major turn for the worse? Were you provoked to sell in

This year will be as important as 1933—a watershed in American history. The Republican-controlled Congress will make substantial progress in cutting back the size and the regulatory powers of the Federal Government. What to watch this year is not how little is accomplished to reverse the trends of two generations, but how much.

Against encouraging developments on Capitol Hill, bad news will abound: a declining economy in the U.S., political and economic trouble in Mexico, social deterioration and ethnic conflict in Russia, Communist retrenchment in China.

So 1995 will test the mettle of the freedom advocates now controlling Congress to confront the forces of leftist reaction and destruction.

*—**Robert D. Novak**, syndicated columnist*

I am extremely positive about the U.S. equity markets, and growth stocks in particular, for 1995 and 1996. With the foreign emerging markets becoming more volatile, the dollar bottoming, and a slower economy accompanied by modest inflation, foreign and domestic investors will increasingly look to the U.S. stock market for higher return.

Growth stocks are as cheap as they were in 1990. Bets should be made in the global information technologies. Worldwide semiconductor revenue will increase from $100 billion to $200 billion and Internet users will increase from 35 million to 180 million by the year 2000. Many companies in these and related industries will experience 30 to 50 per cent growth for the next five years.

The present bearish sentiment will turn bullish as the new Republican Congress enacts its pro-growth agenda, supported by a Republican President in 1996.

*—**Tom Weisel**, Montgomery Securities*

"That awful Alan Greenspan has Gerald so upset."

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As we cross the "threshold of hope" into the next century (and millennium) the conflict between the secular and religious world views will intensify. The dust-up between the Vatican and its allies and the proponents of Planned Parenthood at Cairo last summer is just a harbinger of things to come. Marxism is down for the count and the Enlightenment project is beginning to wilt before the flurry of blows by Pope John Paul II. Look for the knock-out punch around the year 2000.

Our global future will be generally rosy, given the ever-present reality of sin, if, as John Paul II put it in Centesimus Annus, *our political and economic systems respect both the "dignity of the human person" and the "centrality of the family."* ***—Reverend C. John McCloskey III,*** *Mercer House*

I'm worried that there's a nearly unanimous view among establishment economists that GDP growth will decline slowly over the year, hitting 2 to 2.5 per cent by December. Unanimity is a sure sign of inaccuracy. But which way will the experts be wrong? The new Congress is dead serious about cutting spending, and, while that's great news, it will hurt in the very short term. Also, the full force of the 1993 tax increases will be felt before the new rate cuts can ameliorate it. So GDP growth will fall to 1 per cent or lower. Still, 1995 will be very good for the stock market, which will look to the benefits in 1996 and beyond of the new fiscal regime. ***—Jim Glassman,*** Washington Post

1987? At the toughest moment? *Before* the recovery? It could happen again. Perhaps you should have less at risk.

The six commandments for the new investor, then, go as follows:

1. *Know yourself.* Understand your emotional—and financial—ability to tolerate loss. What would the actual consequence of a 10 to 20 per cent decline be in your case? Could you handle it? *Would* you handle it?

2. Equally important, *understand what you own.* Speak with an investment advisor who has lived through all kinds of environments. Ask not just about long-term growth rates for the kinds of investments in your portfolio but also about ranges of historic returns, frequency of losing years, size of losses. Pay especial attention to bonds: they're trickier than they look. Find out the differences between short, intermediate, and long maturities, and where the best risk/reward tradeoffs lie.

3. *Don't put off developing a long-term investment plan* that reconciles Commandments One and Two. Analyze honestly your finances and psyche. The longer until you'll need your money, the smaller the actual consequence of loss. The more laid-back your nature, the more you can afford high-risk/reward investments.

4. *Globalize your stock portfolio.* Invest 20 to 30 per cent of it abroad. The larger your pool of opportunity, the better your long-term results. Furthermore, the world's capital markets are still fairly independent of one another. Despite communications and business links, capital markets have remained largely local in behavior, controlled by local investors reacting to local events. There's still considerable diversification benefit in multinational investing, and diversification reduces risk.

5. Once your long-term plan is established, *stick with that plan.* Don't attempt to "time" the markets. You may get lucky, but it can't be done consistently. Particularly in stocks, the profit-making movements are too sharp and sudden for you not to miss the best of them in "timing" attempts. Put the probabilities on your side: bet on the *typical* behavior of the capital markets, and over time you should realize your expectations.

6. Finally, *remember the word "probabilities."* Nothing is certain in investing. It's dangerous to extrapolate from the present, and while we can estimate the future, we can never be sure. The goal of capital-market research is to put the odds in your favor, and this is the most you should expect. □

A Gold Standard Coming

JUDE WANNISKI

SOMETIME in the next few years, the President of the United States will sign an executive order directing the secretary of the treasury to stabilize the price of our international gold reserves. He will follow this up with a legislative proposal to make the directive permanent, which would require the Federal Reserve to maintain the dollar/gold ratio at, let us say, $350 per ounce. The United States, which was on a gold standard from 1791 to 1971, with the exception of only a few years during the Civil War era, will once again have a dollar as good as gold.

The reason this will happen, under President Clinton or his successor in 1997, is that it is the easiest way to save $1 trillion in debt-service costs.

How does restoring the dollar–gold link save $1 trillion? By removing the risk of dollar devaluation faced by those who lend money to the U.S. Government. This is what a "gold standard" is all about: a government guarantee to its creditors that when it borrows an ounce of gold today, it will pay back an ounce of gold a year or ten years or thirty years from today. It is a "golden handshake" between the government and the people.

Throughout history, when people believe the paper money the government issues will hold its gold value, they have been willing to lend resources to their governments at interest rates around 3 per cent or even below. During World War II, with the U.S. Government pledging to keep the dollar as good as gold, it could finance a national debt almost twice as large as today's at an interest rate of about 2 per cent. With the government now offering no assurance of any kind, it must pay almost 8 per cent to float a thirty-year bond. The arithmetic is simple. If we can refinance our national debt of $5 trillion at 3 per cent instead of 6 to 8 per cent, the savings would be at least $125 billion a year. Compounded, that amounts to $1 trillion over seven years.

Mr. Wanniski is president of Polyconomics, Inc.

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Senator Robert Bennett (R., Utah), a member of the Senate Banking Committee and of the Joint Economic Committee, has undertaken to explain these enormous savings to his colleagues through a simple equation: 1 per cent = $46 billion. That is, for each 1 per cent that can be lopped off long-term interest rates, the government will save $46 billion in debt service, year in and year out.

In his eight years as President, Ronald Reagan repeatedly urged his Cabinet and advisors to consider re-establishing the gold link. "I know of no great nation in the history of the world that has left the gold standard and remained a great nation," is the way the Gipper put it. However, with his advisors divided on the question and Democrats in control of the House Banking Committee, there was never a serious attempt to refix the paper dollar to a gold guarantee.

In those days, gold advocates were usually dismissed as eccentric "gold bugs." In this second wave of the Reagan Revolution, it is only a matter of time before the issue becomes an imperative. The most persistent advocate of a gold–dollar link in recent years has been Jack Kemp, who introduced gold-standard legislation in the House in the early 1980s. Kemp's allies then—who continue to be sympathetic to his gold arguments—include House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Senate Majority Whip Trent Lott, and Senator Connie Mack, chairman of the Joint Economic Committee.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan is an advocate of a renewed dollar–gold link. Former Federal Reserve Governor Wayne Angell, now chief economist of Bear, Stearns, remains a staunch advocate of gold. Angell is one of the closest outside advisors to Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole.

Of course, there is much more involved than interest savings. Money, after all, is what makes the world go around. If the money has constancy, integrity, predictability, the world that revolves around it will reflect these virtues. Workers can have confidence in their contracts with management. Creditors can have confidence in their contracts with debtors.

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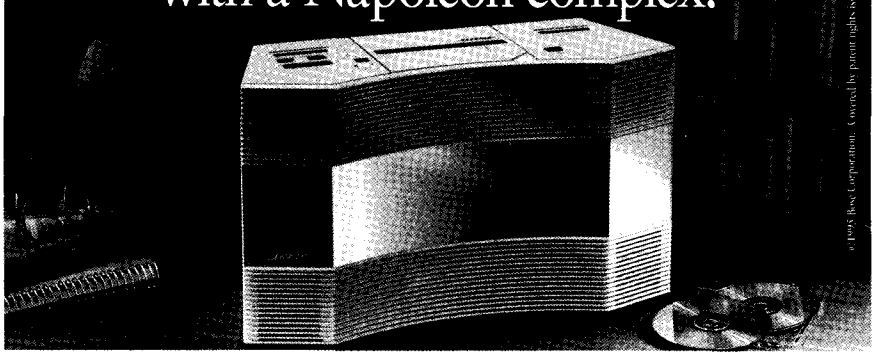

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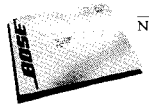

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minishes, because the government can no longer be trusted, not only does business activity diminish, but the level of morality in all of society declines. The incredible inflation in Germany in the early 1920s contributed to the moral breakdown of a normally fastidious people. At a lesser level, the U.S. Government's inflation of the last quarter-century may well have contributed to the unprecedented level of wariness that American citizens feel toward one another.

A currency devaluation by the government is a reneging of its promise to pay back what it borrowed. When the government borrows an ounce of gold and decides to pay back half an ounce, it has devalued the dollar by 50 per cent, cheating its creditors.

Why did we leave gold in the first place? Governments always leave gold when those of its citizens with the greatest debts—the elites who are able to borrow vast sums—persuade the government to devalue the currency. The ordinary people, who are always the nation's primary savers and creditors, are the ones who lose in this zero-sum game.

Gold standards throughout history have been vulnerable in wartime. The extremely expensive Cold War of the last half-century was no exception. We can most charitably understand President Nixon's break with gold in 1971 in this light.

Can the U.S. Government, having left gold, regain the confidence of the people by going back to it? Yes, but we will not see 2 per cent interest rates overnight. We could get to 4 per cent in a year, 3 per cent in two or three years, and 2 per cent in a generation, if the government behaves itself.

Alan Greenspan says he thinks it would help enormously if the legislation were written in a way that directs the Federal Reserve to maintain the dollar/gold ratio at a specified level. The gold-standard legislation

Good as Gold

National Review: Could you sketch a quick picture outlining the basic structure of the gold market in the last few months?

John Brimelow: In the first quarter of 1993, the market pulled up sharply out of a three-year slump—it had fallen from around 410 to 330. Since then, it has been flirting with the 400 mark, but has been unable to manage a sustained breakthrough. On the other hand, the market has not fallen below 372. So, the trading range lately has been rather restricted.

NR: Why is there a floor at 372?

JB: There is a tremendous—and growing—demand for gold in fabrication, e.g., for jewelry and bullion. Demand from the newly rich Asian countries is particularly strong. When gold prices drop to the 370s, gold buying intensifies rapidly and the price stabilizes.

NR: And what explains the ceiling of 400?

JB: There a several reasons. Certainly, psychological resistance is a factor. The market has attempted a breakthrough five times, and failed. In addition, after Clinton's election, concern for the economy prompted some people to buy gold. The Republican take-over of the Congress in November has allievieted economic concerns in some quarters—this has led to a gold sell-off, and reduced prices. Finally, there is speculation that central banks may be holding the market back.

NR: Why would the central banks want to do that?

JB: Two primary reasons. First, it may simply suit the budgetary and financial requirements of various states. The government authorities in place today were, in general, trained to view gold as unimportant. Accordingly, they do not wish to have their assets tied up in gold. As a result, when gold prices rise some governments unload gold, and any upward momentum of gold prices is cut off. Second, central banks are sometimes concerned that rising gold prices threaten confidence in other markets. If investors see that gold is rising, they will conclude that there must be something wrong with other markets. As they sell stocks and move into gold, gold goes up, stocks go down, and there is the potential for a self-fulfilling prophecy.

NR: If various forces are holding the market back, what are the forces driving it forward?

JB: General problems associated with the world economy—e.g., in Mexico, Russia, and even the U.S.—are certainly a factor. But the main force is the great demand for gold in fabrication. Historically, gold production has always exceeded fabrication demand. Now, just within the last few years, this demand has outstripped supply, causing great upward pressure on the price.

NR: Is it likely that gold will go above 400?

JB: Yes. Central-bank reserves are diminished, producers are sold forward, and election-related selling has basically played out. The pressure on the ceiling is intensifying, and it seems that it is just a matter of time until the market breaks through.

NR: If it does, where will the market go?

JB: If and when it gets through, speculators will jump in and the market should go to anywhere between 409 and 420. If those levels are sustained, the market will begin a rise to 500. At 500, the demand for fabrication should have fallen off enough that supply will be able to meet it. Prices would then level out.

NR: Are you saying that gold price is mainly determined by the supply-and-demand ratio?

JB: No. The price of gold is determined by global aggregate wealth. But as that wealth increases, as it has dramatically increased in Asia over the last few years, demand for gold—in fabrication and bullion—increases as well. So, demand is a reflection of aggregate wealth. As far as supply is concerned, the amount of gold in the world is essentially static. Mining produces only a tiny fraction of gold compared to what is already above ground.

NR: Is there any chance that we'll go back on the gold standard?

JB: That is a political, not a financial, question. As a guess, the authorities will resist giving up power.

NR: Thank you.

Mr. Brimelow is director of international equities at BV Capital.

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that Jack Kemp introduced a decade ago does just that.

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The Bad-News Bears

MARK HULBERT

NEWSLETTERS form a unique and valuable subculture within the investment-advisory industry. Most of the rest of Wall Street is characterized by bureaucratic research departments where decision by committee is the norm. This makes innovation difficult, if not impossible. Investment newsletters, in contrast, can pursue any strategy they feel like immediately.

Innovation is particularly crucial in investing because the markets are quick to negate the advantages of strategies that started out beating the market. It's rare for an investment approach to work for very long. Typically, a promising strategy works for a while—until everyone hears about it, jumps on the bandwagon, and it stops working. More often than not, as investors climb off that bandwagon, they find that an investment newsletter was there first.

This isn't to say that all investment newsletters beat the market. As is also true of mutual funds and professional money managers, most of them don't. But we all are far better off for their trying, since in the process we discover promising new strategies that otherwise would have gone unnoticed. "Investment letters are the guerrilla troops of the financial world," *NR* senior editor Peter Brimelow wrote in his classic work on the investment-letter industry, *Wall Street Gurus* (Minerva Books). "By following them, and halting if they terminate in a smoking crater, you can see what techniques work."

How can we know which techniques are working, and which terminate in a smoking crater? That's the purpose of my monthly publication, *The Hulbert Financial Digest*, which reports on the performance of investment newsletters. The *HFD* constructs model portfolios according to the advice offered by the newsletters, taking into account mail delays, commissions, transaction costs, and dividends. The *HFD* tracks more than 430 separate portfolios recommended by 160 different newsletters.

What are the newsletters saying today? The consensus stock-market forecast right now is neutral. The *HFD* calculates this consensus by averaging the stock exposure of each newsletter. A newsletter that is bullish on stocks and thus fully invested would be counted as 100 per cent, while one that is bearish and completely short would be counted as –100 per cent. Right now, the average exposure to the stock market is 37.8 per cent—slightly below the mid-point of its historical range.

This is hardly good news for the bulls, but the *HFD*'s performance ratings contain even worse news. The best long-term performers are even more bearish than their poorer-performing brethren. Among those stock letters beating the market since 1980, when the *HFD* began tracking the industry, there's not a single bull.

The investment letter that has been in first place since 1980 is the *Value Line Investment Survey* (published by Value Line, Inc.). It is recommending that portfolios invest just 60 per cent of assets in the stock market, with 40 per cent held back in cash reserves. This is a very cautious posture. But an even more bearish forecast emerges if we read between the lines of *Value Line*. The source of *Value Line*'s implicit bearishness is its report of the median three-to-five-year price projection among its analysts for all 1,700 stocks that it tracks. This figure stands at 70 per cent. Extensive research has shown that once these projections are revised downward by about 55 percentage points, they are highly correlated with the market's level four years hence. This in effect means that *Value Line* is forecasting that the stock market will be only 15 per cent higher in four years' time.

That's not good enough to justify the risks of holding stocks. A 15 per cent return over four years is equivalent to 3.6 per cent a year compounded. By comparison, you can lock in an annual rate more than double this—7.8 per cent, to be exact—with a U.S. Treasury note maturing in four years. Nor is it certain that the stock market's 3.6 per cent return won't involve some severe downdrafts along the way.

The picture is no more bullish among the other newsletters that have been ahead of a no-brainer buy-and-hold strategy during the last 15 years. In second place is *The Chartist*, edited by Dan Sullivan. He grades the market's primary trend as bearish; he is allocating 79 per cent of his model portfolio to cash reserves and just 21 per cent to the stock market. In third place is the *Zweig Forecast*, edited by Martin Zweig. He's allocating just 30

Mr. Hulbert is editor and publisher of The Hulbert Financial Digest.

Chairman-designate Connie Mack opened a hearing of the Joint Economic Committee in December by defining a new course. "My conviction is that wealth and prosperity emerge from the spirit of creativity that resides within individuals, not governments. Standards of living are enhanced by policies of less taxes, less spending, less government, and more freedom. These will be the watchwords of the JEC." For anyone doubting the conviction of Republicans, stay tuned to the JEC.

—***Brian Westbury**, Chief Economist, Joint Economic Committee*

The strong economy is yesterday's story. The Fed is already overkilling, and they will do more. Recession in 1996 is in the bag. If rates continue to rise, then it is only a question of how deep and how long the recession will be. Stocks will fall 10 to 15 per cent this year and next year as well. The capital-gains tax cut is a good idea. The middle-class kiddie credit provides an incentive for obstetricians only.

—***Marc Miles**, Wainwright & Co.*

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per cent of his portfolio to the stock market.

The newsletters' attitude toward the bond market is nearly identical. The average bond-market exposure is 37.4 per cent among all the bond-timing services the *HFD* follows, below the the mid-point of its historical range. And all three of the bond timers that have beaten the market over the long term are bearish on bonds.

Does this bearishness mean the newsletter industry is sending a vote of no confidence in the Republican-controlled Congress? Only partially. For the most part, the bearishness has nothing to do with Washington. Most of the bearish factors the newsletter editors identify couldn't be changed for the better no matter which political party was in power.

Consider Zweig's attitude toward the election results: "It's nice that Clinton will now have a very difficult time trying to ram through legislation such as last year's tax hike. However, Republican control is not going to cure the stock market's ills, which include extreme overvaluation, poor monetary conditions, an economy that is too strong (which keeps upward pressure on rates), and the hangover from several years of intense speculation."

This attitude was expressed even more bluntly by Richard Russell, who has been writing and publishing his *Dow Theory Letters* since the late 1950s. He remarked after the election, "Listen, I voted Republican, but I also deal in reality." Like the top performers cited above, he is bearish.

Lurking just below the surface of comments such as Zweig's and Russell's is a libertarian distrust of both political parties. In fact, I'd say that the dominant political ideology among newsletter editors is libertarian. Thus, while they voted Republican and were pleased by the results, they are hardly going to bet their portfolios on fiscal sanity emerging any time soon from Washington.

This political tendency is underlined by the fact that the Libertarian Party's 1996 candidate for president is a newsletter editor: Harry Browne, editor of *Harry Browne's Special Reports*. He has been particularly cynical about expecting any lasting changes from the Republican victory, and partisans will be quick to attribute that cynicism to his candidacy. But having read his newsletter for 15 years, I can attest to the consistency of his message.

Browne wrote after the election that "perhaps the most important realization [to emerge] is that Republican control of Congress won't make a significant difference in our lives. If the GOP's entire 'Contract with America' is enacted into law, the government still will be bigger and bossier in 1996 than it is today." What about the Republicans' commitment to less government and limited government? Browne responds: "To most Republican politicians, 'less government' means government that doesn't grow as fast the Democrats want it to. And 'limited government' means government limited to whatever size it happens to be at the moment—not a return to something smaller."

Republicans not predisposed to Browne's libertarianism nevertheless should pay attention to Browne's warning of what the future may hold: "It might be easy to suppose the Democratic Party is the dying party—after the pasting it just took, and with pundits talking about a new long-term era of Republican rule. But I beg to differ. If one of the parties is to die, it's more likely to be the Republicans. There always will be a substantial constituency that wants to run other people's lives—and the Democratic Party is there to cater to that demand unashamedly. But there's no permanent demand for a party whose only claim is that it isn't the Democratic Party—which is about all the Republican have to offer."

You can take or leave the newsletter industry's politics. But you can't dismiss their records, which compare favorably with the best of what the rest of Wall Street has to offer. And there's no denying the current bearishness among the top long-term performers. If they continue their winning ways, the next several years will be rough ones indeed for investors in the stock and bond markets. □

I like George Pataki. He will carry out his campaign promises. New York is a great place, but as the highest-taxed state in the nation it has become too expensive to live and work here. If the capital-gains tax is cut at the federal level, it also should be cut in the same proportion at the state and city level.

—***Lawrence Tisch***, *CBS*

Nineteen ninety-five will be a year when the economy cools, the political rhetoric heats up, and the financial markets fluctuate on their long-term upward course. It will be a year when conservatives once again discover to their dismay (as liberals periodically do) that party labels can be misleading, and that politicians on both sides can be too easily seduced by polls suggesting that "populism" plays better than arithmetic. The good news is that the most exciting movement worldwide is the trend toward individual freedom, and it will turn out to be irreversible even here. And I firmly predict that 1995 will be followed by 1996; remember, you heard it here first.

—***Louis Rukeyser***, Louis Rukeyser's Wall Street & Louis Rukeyser's Mutual Funds

I am always a bull. America has done a good job cleaning house in the corporate sector, and now it must clean up the government's bureaucratic sector. Then we will lead the world in enterprise, as we always have. There are so many investment opportunities. The switch from steam power to brain power is terrific. The challenge is to bring the underclass into the working mainstream; I agree with Gingrich about lap-top computers for the poor. Investors should overlook the valleys; by the end of the decade the Dow will be 10,000. It was below 200 when I started in the business.

—***Bill Burger***, *The Burger Fund*

At the end of the year, the New York Stock Exchange Index will be at 3998, give or take 3 points—I am not a professional forecaster. The rise in GDP will be at the rate of 2.7, unless a capital-gains reform is passed, in which case it will be at 3.1, unless the Federal Reserve Board overreacts, in which case it will diminish by one-third the rate of inflation. The price of a subscription to NATIONAL REVIEW *will be one-fifth the price of an ounce of gold. The value of a subscription to* NATIONAL REVIEW *will exceed the value of an ounce of gold by a factor of 4 to 1.*

—***William F. Buckley Jr.***, NATIONAL REVIEW

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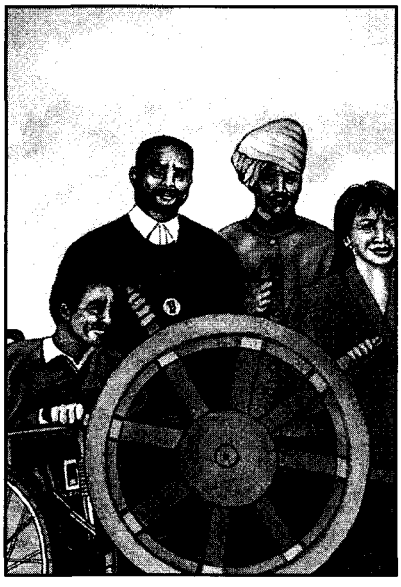

All the Myriad Ways

ILL LIBERALISM

Just when you thought history was over, liberal democracy faces what may be its greatest challenge yet. In the name of "diversity," cultural democrats want to remake man in their image.

JOHN FONTE

THE Danish political scientist Georg Sørensen recently noted that "the tradition that became liberal democracy was liberal first (aimed at restricting state power over civil society) and democratic later (aimed at creating structures that would secure a popular mandate)." Today the liberal foundation of democracy is under an assault which, if successful, will transform democracy itself. An alternative world view, "cultural democracy," has emerged, challenging the basic principles of liberal democracy on practically every important issue.

For the greater part of the twentieth century liberal democracy waged an epic ideological struggle against Fascism and Communism in every corner of the world. After more than seven decades, near the end of what Zbigniew Brzezinski has called "mankind's most bloody and hateful century," liberal democracy emerged triumphant. Many Western commentators proclaimed the world-historical significance of this victory. Francis Fukuyama declared that we had reached the "end of history." He predicted that the basic principles of liberal democracy would never again face serious opposition from a rival political philosophy with a universal appeal.

In fact, a cultural war over the very definition of democracy is now being fought in the United States and Canada, in Australia and New Zealand, and in Western Europe. The battlefields in this war are variously called multiculturalism, diversity, multilingualism, Balkanization, political correctness, racism, feminism, ethnicity, immigration, assimilation, the melting pot, the mosaic, the salad bowl, *laïcité*, *droit à la différence*, sovereignty, globalism, national identity, religious fundamentalism, cultural nationalism. In all these conflicts what is really being contested is whether liberal democracy will survive or whether it will be reconstructed into a new form of governance. This developing war of ideas between liberal democracy and cultural democracy may prove to be the most significant conflict of the twenty-first century.

As Professor Sørensen and others have pointed out, liberal democracy is a combination of two theories: liberalism (individual rights) and democracy (popular sovereignty). Thomas Jefferson declared that "the first principle of republicanism [democracy] is *Lex Majoris Partis*" —majority rule or popular sovereignty—because without some form of majority rule a people would not be sovereign or self-governing. Today the majoritarian principles of liberal democracy are increasingly under attack in the name of supranational and subnational ideals.

Writing in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Harvard political scientist Michael Sandel remarks that "the moral and political institutional scheme of liberal democracy no longer fits the moral and political aspirations of its citizens." He maintains that the liberal-democratic nation-state as "the primary unit of sovereign self-rule" is becoming increasingly obsolete. Sandel advocates a new type of regime that would increase autonomy to "particular communities, be they ethnic, linguistic, or religious," and at the same time ensure the "universalization of rights" at a "supranational level."

Former Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis states that "we are witnessing the explosion of the long obsolete model of liberal democracy." Democracy, he suggests, "will either be reinvented or it will perish." In a similar vein, Jacques Attali, a key advisor to French President François Mitterrand, declares that Western political leaders must "have the courage to abandon traditional notions of national sovereignty." Strobe Talbott, when he was a senior editor at *Time*, predicted that by the end of the twenty-first century "nationhood as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single

Mr. Fonte is co-editor of Education for America's Role in World Affairs *(University Press, 1994). He is a visiting scholar and executive director of the Committee to Review National Standards at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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global authority." He described the devolution of national sovereignty "upward toward supranational bodies" and "downward toward" autonomous units that permit "distinct societies to preserve their cultural identities" as a "basically positive phenomenon."

One of the most detailed of the obsolescence theorists is American futurist Alvin Toffler, who directly challenges the majority-rule doctrine. Toffler writes that only a short time ago we were celebrating "the ultimate victory of liberal democracy," yet today we are "wondering whether liberal democracy itself can survive into the twenty-first century." He states that "the central fact of our times is the rise of a new postmodern civilization" that is displacing modern liberal democracy and its core values of popular sovereignty and majority rule. Indeed, Toffler says, "majority rule, the key legitimating principle of the modern era, is increasingly obsolete." Moreover, he insists that because minorities are "often ignored or even victimized by a huge middle class," majority rule "does not extend social justice; it may very well restrict it."

Toffler favors a "mosaic democracy" throughout the Western world that would "postmodernize the entire system" and "strengthen the role of diverse minorities." He recommends measures similar to those advocated by Lani Guinier, such as weighted voting on issues of special importance to ethnic minorities.

It is significant that the ideals of popular sovereignty and majority rule are not affirmed in most of the official civic-education documents being published today by state governments in the U.S., traditionally the world's most powerful liberal democracy. An important reason for this omission is that most American educators today (like their colleagues in Canada and Australia) adhere to some form of multicultural educational theory. The public-school curricula of Maine, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Colorado, and California devote more space to multiculturalism and cultural diversity than to majority rule and popular sovereignty.

Multiculturalists are extremely uncomfortable with any form of majoritarianism and even with the very idea of an American people. The clearest example of the multiculturalist aversion to majoritarianism is the latest (1991) New York state curriculum guide, considered by many educators the cutting-edge document in curriculum reform. According to the guide, the United States consists of "one nation, many peoples." The executive summary refers to "the various peoples who make up our nation" and "our nation and the peoples who person it." There are many references to the "peoples" of American society in the 65-page document, but the words "the American people" never appear. If there is no people (as in "We the people . . ."), but rather many "peoples," the concepts of popular sovereignty and majority rule become meaningless. If leading American educators are unwilling to affirm such core liberal-democratic principles as popular sovereignty and majority rule in a key civic-education document, then the ideological hegemony of liberal democracy in America is open to question.

The challenge to the "liberal" half of liberal democracy—individual rights, equality of individual citizenship, freedom of expression, and a private sphere free from political interference—is more explicit and direct than the challenge to popular sovereignty and majority rule. Not only do important segments of the Western elite in education, government, and law question the traditional principles of liberalism; they essentially advocate an alternative world view: cultural democracy.

The Individual versus the Group

AT THE heart of the liberal-democratic world view is the concept of the individual citizen. Traditionally, the legal and moral authority of political liberalism is based on the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens, who are equal under the law and together form a self-governing free people. More than two decades ago, German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf wrote that the hallmark of a modern liberal-democratic society is the extent to which individually achieved status replaces the ascribed group status of premodern times in public life. Martin Luther King's dictum that people should be judged not by "the color of their skin but by the content of their character" is a quintessentially liberal idea because it asserts the primacy of the individual over the ascribed group.

Ideally, liberal-democratic citizens will form many voluntary associations to achieve various political and other goals. The liberal civic culture (particularly in the United States and in varying degrees throughout the West) is thus marked by a tradition of voluntary pluralism and citizen participation that has been described by political observers from Tocqueville and Bryce to Almond and Verba.

On the other hand, for the large numbers of Western academics, politicians, and bureaucrats who may be described as cultural democrats, the major actors in the civic culture are no longer individual citizens operating through voluntary associations, but distinct peoples, ethnic groups, and cultural blocs with their own world views, values, histories, heritages, and sometimes languages, which often require different legal rights and separate educational programs. Cultural democrats not only de-emphasize the role of the individual citizen but weaken the concept of citizenship itself by blurring the distinctions between citizens and non-citizens. For example, in many Western countries there is a growing advocacy of voting rights for non-citizens.

Furthermore, cultural democrats reject the view that liberal-democratic values should be, as they put it, "privileged," determining the rules of the civic culture. Instead, they depict civic culture as an arena of "contestation" and "negotiation" among competing values, world views, peoples, and cultural groups. The liberal-democratic world view is simply one "perspective" among many and should not "dominate" other perspectives. Writing in *Social Education*, the leading American social-studies journal, a California education professor, Sandra J. LeSourd, questions whether "a civic culture

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founded upon a uniform philosophical heritage has a moral right to judge actions inspired by alternative heritages."

Liberal democrats emphasize freedom of political expression with few restrictions (mainly in wartime or if the liberal regime itself is threatened). As the more than three hundred speech codes on North American campuses indicate, cultural democrats do not accept this traditional liberal ideal of free expression. They are particularly interested in restricting speech that, as they see it, promotes racism and sexism, weakens the power of "traditionally oppressed groups," or creates a "hostile environment" for diversity.

Central to the West's ideological war against Communism was the defense of a private sphere free from political interference. Liberalism holds that private life is by nature non-political and that it should be free from ideological pressure. During the Cold War defenders of the West would have considered the proposition that "the personal is political" to be inherently totalitarian. Today, however, cultural democrats insist that private actions and attitudes can reinforce the "ideological hegemony" of dominant institutions and belief systems, and therefore that the "personal" is an arena in the struggle for power among groups and a legitimate political concern.

"The price of civilization—a dress code!"

Both liberal democracy and cultural democracy are buttressed by strong unifying symbols and energizing myths. Liberal democracy has unifying symbols that are universal (self-government, freedom, etc.) and others that are particular (the American Dream, the mission of French civilization). Cultural democrats recognize the importance of the particular (although they favor symbols of various cultural groups, as opposed to symbols of national identity), and also have put forward a set of universally appealing unifying symbols and energizing myths. They stress the struggle against oppression—against racism, sexism, and the patriarchy—and the struggle to transform society, to create a new world and a new "person" free of the social pathologies that reinforce the "status quo."

Significantly, the cultural-democratic world view is more universalist than relativist. Indeed, there are strong grounds for arguing that cultural democracy's relativist rhetoric is often a tactical device employed to delegitimize the normative values of liberal democracy rather than the expression of a firm commitment to relativism per se. When advocating the construction of a new society, cultural democrats of necessity emphasize their own set of normative values. As Jerry Martin, a former official of the National Endowment for the Humanities, puts it, "All the talk of hegemony and domination, inclusion and empowerment, rests on strong normative commitments, a belief in radical egalitarianism and the transformation of people into 'better' people." In a parallel argument, Fordham law professor Kenneth Anderson insists that the push for cultural diversity in the United States "is not really about cultural diversity, but rather cover for demanding political conformity—the political conformity of the 'diversity' agenda."

Different Ends, Different Means

THE GOAL of liberal democracy is to sustain a free society. As noted above, this purpose envisions a self-governing free people with a political system based on majority rule, individual rights, and limited government, and a cultural system based on a healthy and vibrant civil society. Liberal democracy prefers citizens with at least a modicum of patriotism (a willingness to defend the nation if it is in danger), but it does not promote militant nationalism. It would like citizens to be active and civic-minded and to participate in efforts to improve the polity, but it does not force them to do so. For the most part, individuals in a liberal democracy are free to pursue their own interests, hold their own opinions, and within broad legal limits live their own lives. Liberal democracy does not want to possess the individual's soul or psyche. It is not a holistic system that explains all aspects of life, but its well-being depends upon the religious and moral characteristics of its citizens.

By contrast, the goal of cultural democracy is to create a "diverse society." In practical terms, "diversity" is defined as proportional representation for groups based on race, ethnicity, sex, and, in some countries, language. Day in and day out, particularly in North America, but also in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Western Europe (including, significantly, the administrative offices of the European Union), government bureaucracies, regulatory organizations, universities, schools, professional associations, trade unions, legal systems, businesses, and even churches are under pressure to "solve the problem of underrepresentation" of cultural minorities and women in various positions. Many of these same institutions are also under constant pressure to explain why there are inequalities between white males and minorities and women in pay rates and educational achievement, and, for that matter, in almost

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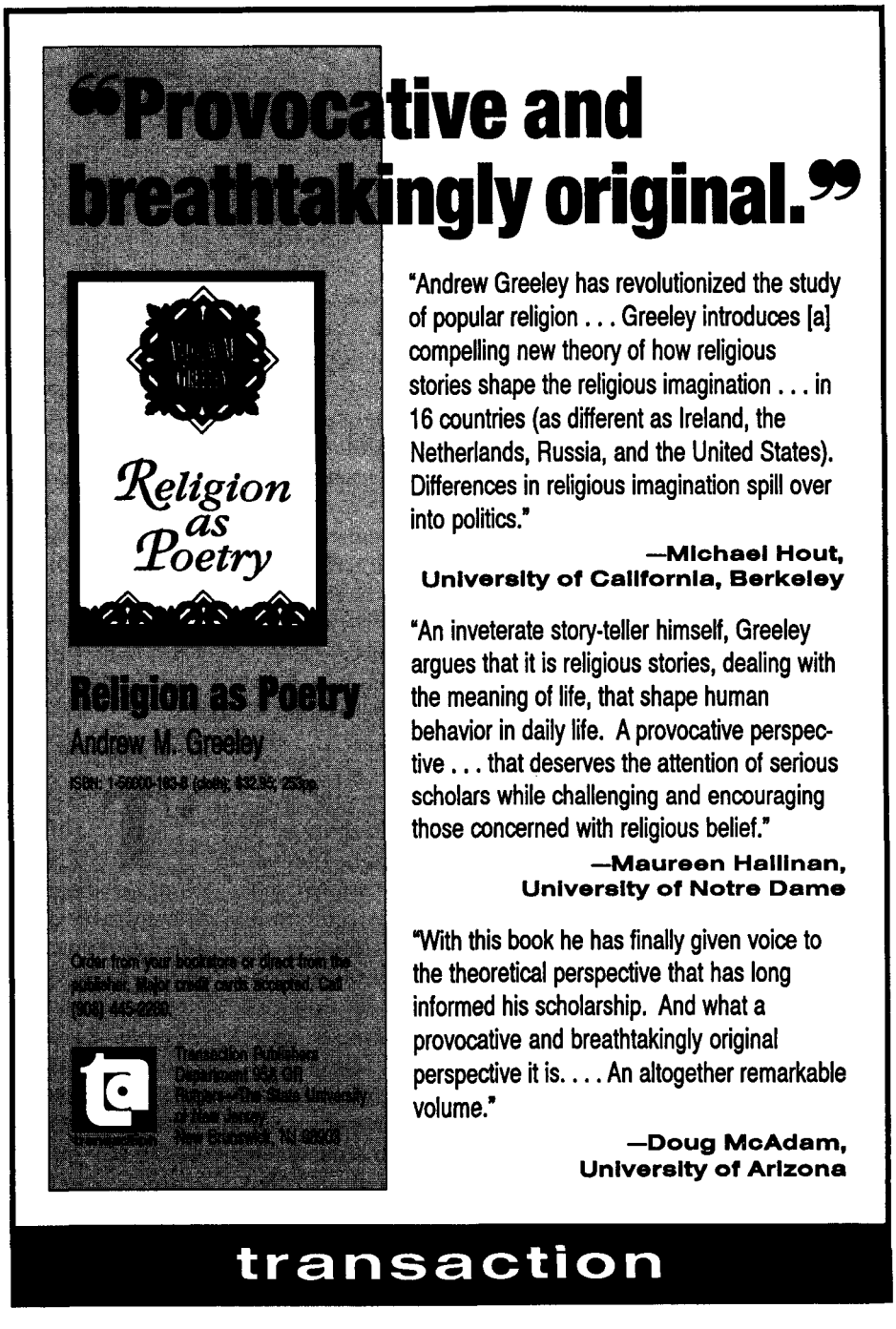
every other aspect of life, including access to medical care, rates of incarceration, number of books published, number of computer hours logged, amount of exercise undertaken, and so on.

In contrast to the philosophy of liberal democracy, which promotes equality of opportunity for individuals irrespective of race, ethnicity, and sex, the ideology of cultural democracy defines justice as achieving a particular result: proportional representation of cultural minorities and women in all sectors of society. To be sure, liberal democrats also oppose racism and sexism, but they define these terms differently and consequently propose different solutions to the problems resulting from bigotry. Traditionally liberal democrats reject racial and sexual prejudice that prevents individuals from achieving the same goals that other individuals are entitled to achieve. The U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 in its original form is a classic example of liberal-democratic thinking, whereas subsequent judicial and bureaucratic interpretations of the bill that established group rights represent cultural-democratic thinking.

From popular non-fiction authors to mainstream academics, cultural democrats call for the "transformation" or "emancipation" of the human personality. As Gloria Steinem argues in her best-selling *The Revolution from Within*, the idea is that human beings are "infinitely redeemable" and can be transformed into non-sexist, non-competitive persons through new and non-hierarchical forms of social organization. This "transformationist" perspective (in which the self is "socially constructed") is echoed throughout Western elites. Professor Steven Rockefeller of Middlebury College, for example, says that "the moral meaning of democracy is found in reconstructing all institutions so that they become instruments of human growth and liberation." The cultural democrats echo the age-old argument that individuals are infinitely malleable, that there is no such thing as a fixed "human nature."

This position strikes at the philosophical foundations of liberal-democratic thought and the concept of limited government. During the long ideological struggle against totalitarianism in this century, liberal democrats explicitly attacked the concept of the "new man," whether it was the USSR's "new Soviet man," the Nazis' Aryan superman, or Che Guevara's "new socialist man." They argued that developing a "new man" was neither possible (because human beings are not infinitely malleable, although they are capable of improvement), nor desirable (because such attempts at social engineering inevitably weaken liberty). Indeed, at the heart of American liberal-democratic thought as expressed in *The Federalist Papers* is the idea that human nature is neither perfect nor perfectible and, hence, checks and balances are needed for both the governors and the governed. As James Madison puts it in *Federalist* 51, "It may be a reflection on human nature that such devices [checks and balances] should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on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human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither internal nor external controls on government would be necessary."

Thomas Sowell suggests that modern political conflict is based on two competing visions of human nature that were articulated during the Enlightenment. The first, a "constrained vision," posits that man is not perfectible, and so society should consider the various moral and mental limitations of human beings while at the same time developing institutions that help improve the human condition. This view is expressed in the philosophies of Adam Smith, John Locke, William Blackstone, and the authors of *The Federalist Papers*.

The rival position, the "unconstrained vision," insists that human beings are very malleable, that their potential for moral change is essentially unlimited, and that society will be transformed by naturally virtuous human beings once they are freed from old ideas and institutions. This view is expressed in the writings of William Godwin and *philosophes* such as d'Holbach and, particularly, Condorcet. If the philosophical forebears of contemporary liberal democracy are thinkers like Madison who would have rejected the concept of a "new man," then the philosophical forebears of present-day cultural democracy are thinkers like Condorcet who would have agreed that "the self is socially constructed."

Just as liberal democracy and cultural democracy envision different ends for society, they require different means to achieve those ends. Clearly, cultural democrats will not be able to create a "diverse society" by simply expanding the practices of liberal democracy that have historically sustained a free society, such as majority rule within the structure of limited government, a healthy civil society with voluntary pluralism, and the centrality of individual rather than collective rights. On the contrary, those traditional liberal-democratic practices must be jettisoned (or "reinvented") if the major goals of the diversity movement are to realized. Indeed, these goals—group proportionality in institutions and attitudinal changes in the individual psyche (the elimination of racism and sexism in word and thought in public and private life)—require the active intervention of a large administrative–bureaucratic–judicial apparatus. Since majority opinion in Western countries is generally opposed to the aims of the diversity movement (for example, public-opinion polls in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand always register strong opposition to preferential hiring practices to increase the representation of minorities and women), cultural democrats usually act through the courts or bureaucracies rather than legislatures. When diversity legislation is achieved, as in the case of the American Civil Rights Act of 1991 or the Canadian Multicultural Act of 1987, it is often vaguely worded and therefore subject to judicial and bureaucratic interpretation.

Under external and internal pressures from various bureaucracies (government affirmative-action offices, regional accrediting agencies of higher education, etc.), major institutions of civil society throughout North America, including most large corporations and universities, have accepted two major premises of cultural-democratic ideology: first, that racism and sexism are "systemic" in business and the academy because people of color and women are "underrepresented" in positions of authority; second, that essential differences of race, ethnicity, and sex require that minorities and women be judged by different cultural values from the ones applied to white males. Heather Mac Donald reports in *The New Republic* that 40 per cent of American companies have instituted "diversity training" that not only attempts to change attitudes and behavior about race, ethnicity, and gender but in effect establishes "different standards for different groups." During the past decade most universities in North America have also moved from cultural-democratic thought to cultural-democratic action by creating new bureaucracies to carry out an array of diversity programs.

Not surprisingly, with the erosion of traditional sovereignty, supranational bureaucracies increasingly impose cultural-democratic norms on liberal-democratic states. As Cornell law professor Jeremy Rabkin pointed out recently in *Commentary*, a European Community directive on "comparable worth" was implemented by Britain under Margaret Thatcher even though such a controversial measure could never have passed the elected House of Commons, long the guardian of Britain's sovereignty and the heart of her liberal democracy.

Seizing the High Ground

"TO SEIZE, retain, and exploit the initiative" is a major principle of war, according to official U.S. Army doctrine. In the ideological conflict that we are discussing the initiative is in the hands of the cultural-democratic challengers to the hegemony of liberal democracy. Put another way, the cultural democrats have seized the "moral high ground" and defined the terms of the debate. The cultural-democratic offensive has three prongs: 1) the delegitimization of the liberal-democratic regime, 2) the redefinition of democratic values, and 3) demographic determinism, that is, the insistence that demographic change in Western nations is inevitable and requires the acceptance of cultural-democratic principles.

Rhetoric impugning the legitimacy of liberal democracy is now commonplace in the West. When university leaders, foundation officials, and mainline clerics routinely speak about "the patriarchy," "oppressive struc-

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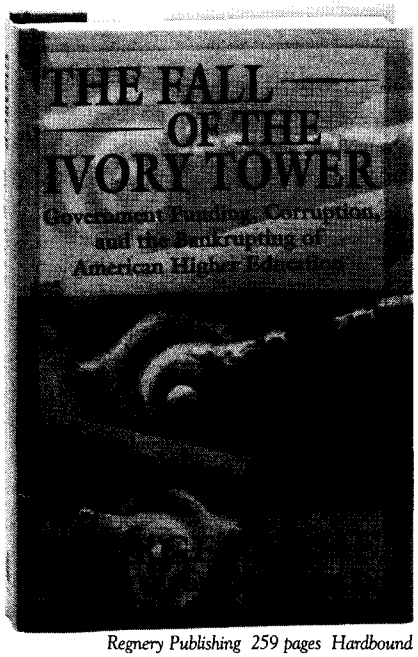
tures," or "institutional" racism and sexism, and declare that minorities and women constitute "the oppressed" or "the marginalized," they are stripping the liberal-democratic regime of its legitimacy. If Britain's parliamentary democracy and America's constitutional republic are "patriarchies" that "oppress people," they are by definition illegitimate. People are, of course, sometimes unfairly discriminated against in liberal democracies, but this does not constitute systemic oppression. "Discrimination" implies that there are remedies available under the rule of law; a "patriarchy" that "oppresses" people suggests that the system itself is illegitimate. The former is the rhetoric of reform; the later is language that justifies the deconstruction of the old liberal order and the creation of a new regime.

In academic writing throughout the West, cultural democrats endorse "democratic values" that are essentially incompatible with the liberal-democratic norms of majority rule, limited government, and individual rights. "Democratic principles" are redefined as anti-majoritarian. Thus, multicultural educators in the U.S., Canada, and Australia insist that it is "undemocratic" for the majority (Western) culture to impose its values and norms on people from other cultures, including non-Western minorities and new immigrants. Instead, "democratic values" require that all cultures be given more or less equal status in the general civic culture. As America's leading multiculturalist educator, James Banks, says, "To create an authentic democratic *unum* with moral authority and perceived legitimacy, the *pluribus* (diverse peoples) must negotiate and share power." In mainstream education documents, cultural democrats emphasize again and again the "gap" between social reality and democratic ideals; then they proceed to define those "democratic ideals" in loosely worded utopian terms that suggest equality of material condition and group proportionality in all sectors of society.

"Demography is destiny" has become the trumpet call of cultural democrats in the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Because of unstoppable, large-scale immigration, the argument goes, the populations of North America and Australia will become increasingly non-Western. The traditional Western value system will be inadequate for new demographic patterns; a more multicultural ethos is required.

Ten years ago Sidney Hook forcefully restated the liberal-democratic concept of civic assimilation, declaring that "precisely because" American liberal democracy is a "pluralistic, multiethnic, and uncoordinated society" all citizens need a "prolonged schooling in the history of our free society, its martyrology, and its national tradition." Today, the traditional idea of assimilating immigrants into a national identity is officially rejected by the governments of Canada and Australia, and is under constant attack by elites in the United States. The leading organization of American civic educators declares that national assimilation is often "neither democratic nor humane." Suggestions that liberal-democratic regimes



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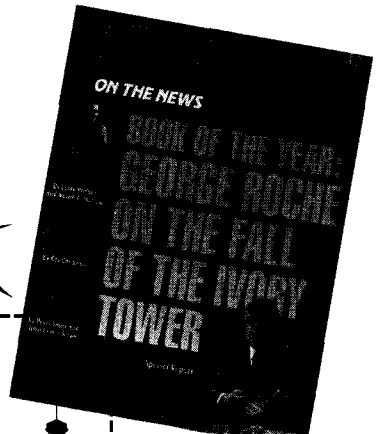

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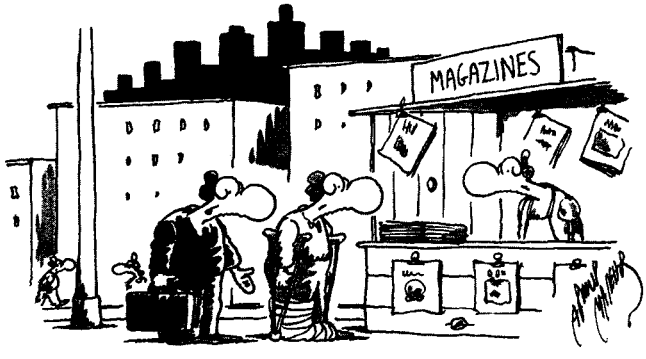
should limit immigration to levels consistent with steady civic assimilation are fiercely denounced as both impossible and immoral. Put bluntly, cultural democrats are saying that traditional liberal democracies do not have the moral right to reproduce themselves, either by fostering civic assimilation, by limiting immigration, or by some combination of the two.

The Banners of Progress

AS WE have seen, the cultural democrats occupy the "commanding heights" of the ideological war. They appear to support "inclusion" and to favor the underdog; more importantly, they seem to be winning and thus represent "progress" and "the future." This appearance of impending victory is perhaps their greatest strength. They are also able to intimidate their liberal-democratic opponents by branding them "racists" and "sexists," in the same way that unscrupulous Western demagogues once unfairly condemned political opponents as "Reds" or ambitious medieval inquisitors denounced rivals as "heretics."

Cultural democracy is a dynamic movement with an infrastructure of activists that is coming to dominate government agencies and mainstream educational, cultural, commercial, religious, legal, intellectual, and philanthropic organizations. Of course, the majority (perhaps the overwhelming majority) of the professionals in key positions in civil society and government are not cultural democrats. However, like most people, they are concerned with their own lives and unlikely to become involved in seemingly abstract fights over principles. While they are often resentful of the push for diversity, they nonetheless understand power. They know that resisting the diversity movement can have unpleasant consequences for one's career. It is easier to go along with "the times." Indeed, an alert professional's previously intuitive understanding of the realities of the workplace has been institutionalized in recent years in the U.S. and Canada, with career advancement in both public and private sectors increasingly tied to how well an executive "manages diversity."

Centrist and conservative political forces in North America and Australia have not seriously challenged the cultural-democratic premises of the necessity for racial and sexual preferences and group proportionality. In 1982, under the Progressive Conservatives, preferential policies were enshrined in Canada's new constitution. From 1975 to 1983 Australia's Liberal (i.e., conservative) Party continued the multicultural and ethnic-preference programs begun by the Labor Party. Under President Bush, American Republicans supported the central premises of group proportionality in the Labor Department's "Glass Ceiling" report and the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Even the Reagan Administration, after internal bickering, did not rescind the Executive Order on Affirmative Action. When Reagan Administration officials were criticized for the "underrepresentation" of women and minorities in appointed positions, they meekly retorted, "We're improving," or "We have a good record." What they did not do was answer their critics by forthrightly challenging the anti-liberal concept of "underrepresentation" itself.



"My client's foot was seriously injured when a subscription card fell from one of your magazines."

If present trends continue, it is likely that liberal democracy will steadily evolve during the next century into cultural democracy. This transformation is already well under way, and is likely to proceed gradually, almost imperceptibly, sector by sector, in much the same way as the evolution from the old aristocratic order to bourgeois liberalism in Europe. Some elements of the old liberal regime will persist, just as elements of the aristocracy persisted under the new bourgeois regime during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Future historians will not be able to identify the precise point at which the West became "post-liberal-democratic" any more than present-day historians are able to tell us when Europe became "post-Christian." Indeed, people may still call the system "liberal democracy" even though its basic principles will have been hollowed out and "reinvented," much as we sometimes refer to Western Europe as "Christian," even though most Europeans today are not believing (let alone practicing) Christians in any real sense.

The current "culture wars" are not, as Fukuyama and many others suggest, merely arguments over how best to implement liberal democracy. They are fundamental disagreements about the meaning of democracy itself. Cultural democracy is a movement to alter radically the liberal-democratic way of life. The goal of multicultural education, according to James Banks, is "to transform the United States from what it is to what it could and should be." Addressing a conference in the Netherlands in 1992, Joseph Raz, a prominent professor of the philosophy of law at Balliol College, Oxford, declared, "This doctrine [multiculturalism] has far-reaching implications. It calls on us to reconceive society." It means the "emergence of a new common culture" and "require[s] a widespread change in attitude."

Make no mistake: we are in the midst of a great ideological conflict between two incompatible world views. Liberal democracy was severely challenged during the twentieth century by Fascism and Communism. But as we enter the twenty-first century, the internal challenge from cultural democracy may prove to be liberal democracy's greatest test. □

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Russia's New Hard Line

GRRRR . . .

Taking advice from Soviet-era strategists, Boris Yeltsin is aggressively challenging U.S. interests around the world. It's time to recognize that Russia is now a rival, not an ally.

ADRIAN KARATNYCKY

RUSSIAN planes and artillery continue to bomb the civilians of breakaway Chechnya, a worrying sign of a cardinal change in the Kremlin's domestic policy. But Russia's foreign policy under President Boris Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev has also made a fundamental shift that is putting it at odds with U.S. interests. At times, in the last year, Russia has behaved constructively, as when it withdrew its troops from the Baltic states, and when it supported the U.S. position on Haiti; at other times—and with increasing frequency—it has begun adopting policies that resemble those of its Soviet predecessor.

Although Foreign Minister Kozyrev recently claimed on *Meet the Press* that Russia "shall seek full strategic and pragmatic partnership with the U.S.," the unmistakable drift of Russia's policies has been in the direction of an often reckless assertion of power. This shift has come in three stages. In 1992, the first year after the collapse of the USSR, Russia began efforts to reassert hegemony over former Soviet republics. Under the pretext of protecting the rights of ethnic Russians and "Russian speakers" in what was dubbed the "near abroad," Russia began to intervene in the internal affairs of newly independent states. Russian security forces assisted two coup attempts in Azerbaijan, and Russian troops have been involved in conflicts in Moldova, Tajikistan, and Georgia. In 1994, Russian officials began to assert the right to intervene in neighboring states if ethnic Russians were persecuted. On December 12, the head of President Yeltsin's Department of Citizenship Affairs charged that "most of the new states" discriminate against Russian populations. Also in December, President Yeltsin upped the ante by issuing a decree that unilaterally extends the right of Russian citizenship to citizens of the non-Russian republics of the former USSR, against the objections of most of their leaders.

A central thrust of Russia's foreign policy in the "near abroad" has been the effort to transform the Commonwealth of Independent States into an economic, military, and political union. Last June, Lieutenant General Leonid Ivashov, who serves as secretary of the Council of Defense Ministers of the CIS, said he favored "a military or defense union" that would lead to the "creation of joint or single armed forces of the CIS countries." With increasing frequency, President Yeltsin has spoken on behalf of the 12 states that are formally part of the CIS, most recently in Budapest last month at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The vast majority of Russia's political elite favors the creation of a cohesive union of states that would resemble the old USSR.

"They don't have television. They're reading people. So be on guard!"

The second phase of the turn to a hard line began in the summer of 1993, when Russia extended its assertive policies to Eastern and Central Europe, successfully opposing the rapid integration of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia into NATO. The policy initially was articulated in terms of concern about the domestic consequences of such an expansion, which Foreign Minister Kozyrev suggested would strengthen the hand of anti-Western Communists and neo-fascist hard-liners. But at a meeting of foreign ministers from NATO and the former Warsaw Pact last June in Istanbul, Russia was at its most uncooperative, blocking any reference in the meeting's final statement to expansion of NATO membership eastward. One angry NATO diplomat, quoted by Reuters, said the gathering had been a "pretty bloody affair. It was an absolutely Soviet exercise, a disastrous performance by the Russians, and it does not augur well." Russia's opposition to NATO expansion has grown more shrill in recent months, capped off by President Yeltsin's warning in Budapest on December 5 that a NATO move eastward would plunge the world into a "Cold Peace."

At the United Nations, Russia has shown its new face with its aggressive

Mr. Karatnycky, president of Freedom House, is co-author of New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence.

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pursuit of a pro-Serbian policy that led to Russia's first Security Council veto since the collapse of the USSR. In Poland, Russia used an incident in which Russians and other citizens of the former USSR were manhandled by Polish police as the pretext for canceling an October visit by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and holding up the signing of a number of commercial agreements, sending Polish–Russian relations into a deep chill.

As Russia reasserted itself in the former USSR and in Central and Eastern Europe, the State Department accepted the legitimacy of Russia's interests in the "near abroad" and showed understanding for Russian concerns about international isolation. Some in the Central Intelligence Agency and at the State Department even warmed to the idea of Russia as a force for stability in the former USSR, particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus. This policy of cooperation, aid, and accommodation, however, did little to moderate Russian conduct. Instead, it may have encouraged Russia to move to the third phase of its reassertion of power: during the last six months, Russia has been making overtures to countries that are in the front ranks of America's enemies, including Iraq and Cuba.

In the case of Iraq, Russia is actively pursuing diplomacy aimed at lifting UN sanctions. On November 10, Foreign Minister Kozyrev made a shameful appearance in Baghdad, where he effusively praised "the political wisdom of Saddam Hussein." Even after Saddam had recognized the sovereignty of Kuwait, Mr. Kozyrev thought it necessary to make an unctuously friendly address to the rubber-stamp Iraqi National Assembly, conferring upon it an undeserved legitimacy.

In the case of Cuba, Russia is openly opposing U.S. policy and restoring severed links with the island dictatorship. As part of this policy shift, on October 28 Russia for the first time since the collapse of the USSR voted for a UN resolution calling for an end to the U.S. economic "blockade" of Cuba. Russia had abstained from earlier votes in 1992 and 1993. ITAR-TASS reported on October 29 that the increasingly influential First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets has told Cuban officials that "Cuba may become a springboard for the advance of Russian high technologies to Latin American markets." Although the last Russian armed forces left Cuba in 1993, Russia maintains a major listening post on the island. And at the beginning of November, General Mikhail Kolesnikov, chief of the general staff of the Russian armed forces, came to Cuba for a working visit—the first visit by a high-ranking military official since the collapse of the USSR.

According to several Russian press reports, Russian Foreign Ministry officials are worried about a possible warming in the U.S. relationship with

Syria and are seeking ways to limit U.S. influence there. Russia is also strengthening relations with Iran. The Western industrial democracies have not cooperated with Iran on nuclear power since the fall of the Shah, partly because of security concerns. On January 9 Russia announced that it was set to complete an Iranian nuclear power plant whose construction had been halted by Germany in 1977.

Russia also is undermining U.S. commercial interests in the former Soviet Union. In September, the Foreign Ministry asserted that Russia did not recognize a $7.5-billion agreement with Azerbaijan to exploit oil on the Caspian shelf in cooperation with a consortium including Amoco, Unocal, and Pennzoil.

On a host of other issues, Russia's security and foreign-policy establishments now behave in a fashion that reflects an aggressive, Soviet-era mentality. When Russian scientist Vil Mirzayanov raised international concern about reports that Russia was continuing the illegal development of a binary chemical weapon, and when U.S. officials asserted that Russia was concealing information on chemical weapons, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigory Karasin was arrogantly dimissive. And in mid July, after the emergence of incontrovertible evidence that nuclear fuel captured from smugglers in Germany was of Russian origin, Russia angrily denied involvement and accused the West of manufacturing a case to stir up anti-Russian sentiment. A spokesman for Russia's Foreign Counterintelligence Service even charged that Western concern about the smuggling of nuclear materials was part of an effort aimed at "placing the Russian nuclear arsenal under Western control."

In pursuing its new hard line, Russia appears to be seeking ways to exert pressure on Turkey, a member of NATO. In October, Moscow was the site of a major conference of the Confederation of CIS Kurds, which proclaimed support for the terrorist anti-Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK. In recent weeks a leader of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan has been operating openly in Moscow, holding press conferences and meeting Russian officials in an effort to build support for Russia as "mediator and peacekeeper" in the conflict between the Kurds and Turkey.

Reverting to Type

THE POLICIES that are putting Russia at odds with the U.S. reflect a political consensus that parliamentary speaker Ivan Rybkin has described thus: "Great-power patriotism and extricating the country from the present crisis are ideas everybody is ready to work for, regardless of political orientation." The "great-power" hard line is linked to what Russian political analyst Georgi Arbatov has called "a growing anti-American and anti-Western mood among our politicians." After the collapse of the USSR, Russia received international recognition as the Soviet Union's legal heir. Now, in its external and internal conduct, Russia is fast becoming the USSR's spiritual heir.

The conventional explanation for the shift is that President Yeltsin has taken a tougher line to appease his critics on the far Right and to respond to an anti-Western public mood. Yet reliable opinion polls conducted in recent months show that, while many Russians are nostalgic for the Soviet

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period, there is no widespread suspicion of the U.S., which 55 per cent of citizens regard as an ally. A clear majority of Russians also admire America's democracy and market system.

Thus, while President Yeltsin warned on December 5 that NATO's expansion to the east would sow "the seeds of mistrust," nearly half his countrymen favored membership in the alliance and did not regard it as a threat. Indeed, as widespread public opposition to Russia's invasion of Chechnya makes clear, President Yeltsin's hard-line actions are not being driven by public opinion. Instead, by pursuing such policies President Yeltsin and Mr. Kozyrev are alienating their own supporters among Russian democrats, while failing to earn the support of Russian Communists, Agrarians, and neo-fascists.

The Triumvirate

A MORE plausible explanation for the policy shift is President Yeltsin's capitulation to military and security forces eager to increase their budgets and resources. The hard line is also linked to the growing influence of Russian Security Council Secretary Oleg Lobov, presidential advisor Valentin Ilyushin (an aide to Yeltsin during his years as Party boss in Sverdlovsk), and General Aleksandr Korzhakov, head of the Presidential Security Service. Since November, this triumvirate has taken complete charge of Mr. Yeltsin's military policy, shutting out Chief of Staff Sergei Filatov.

General Korzhakov is an ex-KGB colonel who followed Mr. Yeltsin into political exile and served as his bodyguard after he was purged from the Communist Party leadership in 1987. In his new memoirs, Yeltsin calls Korzhakov "decent, intelligent, strong, and courageous." In December 1993 General Korzhakov stood at the head of the Alpha detachment and stormed the Russian parliament to take President Yeltsin's armed enemies prisoner and defeat a coup. Fiercely loyal to his president, General Korzhakov is a man of limited horizons, a primitive intriguer devoted to conspiracy theories. He apparently convinced President Yeltsin that a political conspiracy involving Moscow's popular mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, and Russia's Most bank contributed to the collapse of the ruble in October. Korzhakov mounted a raid on the bank's headquarters on December 2.

Korzhakov, Lobov, and Ilyushin have been responsible for the removal of democrats from President Yeltsin's inner circle and their replacement by ex-Communist apparatchiks. The general is rumored to have lobbied for the dismissal of reformist Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Shokhin and to have orchestrated the dimissal of democrat Yevgeny Savastyonov, an ally of Andrei Sakharov who headed the Moscow branch of the Federal Counterintelligence Service.

In the murky court politics of the Kremlin, General Korzhakov appears to favor First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, a representative of the military–industrial complex who is gaining influence within the Russian government. Recently General Korzhakov surfaced as the author of a memo to Russia's prime minister that warns against a World Bank program to modernize Russia's oil pipelines and storage facilities. In General Korzhakov's view, "the national economy cannot be strengthened through foreign intervention in the raw-material sectors of the economy." He adds that "the conclusion of these agreements will promote the increased dependence of the functioning of these systems on foreign capital." He asserts that Western investment in the energy sector will be used to limit Russian oil production. There is growing suspicion that the brutal attack on Chechnya was strongly backed by General Korzhakov and his allies from the armed forces and the military–industrial complex. And there is evidence that the troika of Lobov–Ilyushin–Korzhakov favors a reversal of privatization and the renationalization of companies in the energy and military sectors.

Communists Redivivi

IN PART, the gradual Sovietization of Russian policy reflects the declining influence of non-Communists and anti-Communists in the parliament and in Yeltsin's administration. Because Russia's democrats focused far too little attention on the evils of Communism and on the need for "de-Communization" after the collapse of the August 1991 putsch, increasing numbers of Soviet-era officials have taken their places in the upper

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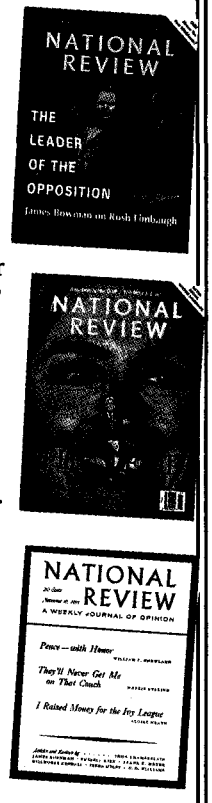

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reaches of the foreign-policy, security, and industrial sectors. They have taken with them many of their ingrained habits of opposition to and suspicion of the West. Many democratic allies of Yeltsin suggest that a quiet putsch has achieved what the unsuccessful coup attempts of August 1991 and December 1993 failed to accomplish: the transfer of power to the apparatchiks of the old order.

Whatever the reasons, the shift in Russia's external conduct can no longer be ignored or excused. The Clinton Administration and the new Congress should acknowledge that Russia today is a rival, not an ally. The U.S. should make clear to Russian officials that their new adversarial foreign policy carries a price in terms of foreign aid and support in the international financial institutions. At the same time, U.S. assistance should favor the countries on Russia's western rim—especially Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states.

While Russia today may appear to be a pitiful and helpless giant, unable seriously to challenge U.S. interests globally, it should be kept in mind that Russia borders upon many extremely weak and vulnerable states. With Russia's growing determination to bring these states into a new union or confederation, and given the country's immense industrial potential, these grandiose intentions are harbingers of a role Russia is determined to play around the world.

The dangerous trends are not yet irreversible. Russia remains a democracy with many organized political forces that seek close cooperation with the West. Most Russians have not succumbed to anti-Western xenophobia. The U.S. should be bolstering these forces rather than accommodating President Yeltsin's new hard line. □

Both Sides Now

MAN HANDLING

Is sexual harassment only something men do to women? A growing number of men say otherwise.

HARSH LUTHAR & ANTHONY TOWNSEND

ALTHOUGH a popular success, *Disclosure* was derided by feminists who considered its premise—sexual harassment of a man by a woman—silly at best, dangerous at worst. After all, everyone knows sexual harassment is something a man does to a woman. That assumption is reflected in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidelines on sexual harassment, where the harasser is always a "he" and the victim a "she." You have to refer to a footnote to verify that the law, in theory, protects men as well as women.

Mr. Luthar is an assistant professor of management at Bryant College in Rhode Island. Mr. Townsend is an assistant professor of management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Most of the published research on sexual harassment agrees: women are victims; men are harassers. In surveys, some 40 per cent of women report being harassed at work, compared to a negligible proportion of men. When men do report harassment, their harassers are often other men.

But these indicators may not give us an accurate picture of what is going on. To begin with, the leading sexual-harassment researchers are feminist ideologues who are mainly concerned with finding evidence of patriarchal oppression. They design their studies accordingly: most of the research does not even include male subjects.

More to the point, most men would not recognize sexual harassment if it hit them in the face. Ask a number of men if they have been harassed, and nine out of ten, will say, "No, but I'd like to be." Men generally do not consider teasing, sexual jokes, and lewd innuendoes from female co-workers harassment; they are not upset by the kinds of comments and incidents that have brought female plaintiffs millions of dollars in awards for "hostile environment" claims. In a recent lawsuit against the Jenny Craig diet organization by several male employees, one of the plaintiffs said he initially liked it when the women he worked with told him he had a nice body. He and the others did not file suit until they were denied promotions, were assigned to poor sales territories, or were terminated from the organization. After examining their complaint, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination found probable cause of gender bias in the organization's actions against the men.

Since men are not sensitive to harassing behavior that women (or at least feminists) construe as harassment, it's not surprising that they are not filing many harassment complaints. Consider a scenario. A young man gets a job as an assistant manager in a bank. His boss, a member of the National Association of Bank Women, often talks about the importance of mentoring young women and complains that men have created a glass ceiling that oppresses female managers. Her coffee mug is emblazoned with an anti-male statement. To top it off, she and the other women who work in the branch often tell dirty jokes in which men are portrayed derogatorily. There's little question that this man is the victim of a "hostile environment," one that may well interfere with his ability to perform his duties. But if you ask him whether he has been sexually harassed, he will probably say no.

To get beyond this barrier, male subjects in harassment surveys should be asked not whether they have been sexually harassed but whether certain kinds of behavior have occurred. When we ask male undergraduates if they have ever been sexually harassed by a female instructor, almost all of them say no. But when we ask if they have experienced specific types of treatment in a female instructor's classroom, such as derogatory or off-color comments about men, some 60 per cent of them report such incidents.

As for "sleep with me or else" harass-

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ment—the kind dramatized in *Disclosure*—we are starting to see court cases indicating that some men (and women) have been pressured into sex by a predatory female boss. There is every reason to believe that more such cases will appear as more women assume positions of power.

Yet most people still snicker about female harassment of males. Several men who claimed to have been sexually harassed appeared recently on *Donahue*. Between the host's eye rolling and the audience's derision, you would have thought these men were reporting encounters with UFOs. Sometimes even juries do not take the subject seriously. In a 1991 case in Michigan, the jury agreed that a man had endured repeated fondling by his female co-workers but awarded him only $100 in damages. Compare that to the hundreds of thousands of dollars regularly awarded to female plaintiffs.

Men are doubly penalized by the current alarm about sexual harassment. On the one hand, they are weakened in any office encounter with a woman because she always holds the harassment trump card. On the other hand, the current interpretation of harassment law gives women license to say and do things in the workplace to which men cannot respond in kind. There is an open hostility toward men in many workplaces, and no one is rushing to document or change it.

Business, which should have an interest in finding out the truth, has instead swallowed whole the received wisdom on sexual harassment and acted on it swiftly and thoroughly. Companies spend millions of dollars on "harassment training," hoping that putting employees through these programs will stave off potential problems or at least inoculate them against major liability. Although some of the harassment training is of passable quality (given the flawed evidence on which it is based), too much of the training results in resentment by male employees and "over-empowerment" of female employees. In a recent case, a group of male air-traffic controllers filed charges against the Federal Aviation Administration, claiming they were forced to observe photos of male sex organs and let female participants fondle them during harassment training.

Sexually harassed men face skepticism from both sides of the political spectrum. On the Left, no one is seriously challenging the anti-male feminist paradigm. On the Right, commentators have cautioned that men should not succumb to the harassment hysteria. Yet conservatives in particular should take a more active interest in setting the record straight, given the costs and public-policy ramifications of current erroneous theories.

Workplace Tensions

THE current approach to sexual harassment has clearly hurt working relationships between men and women. Men are retreating to the safety of their offices, avoiding private contact with female co-workers, and carefully censoring their speech. Although the evidence has not yet been collected, it seems likely that male harassment victims, like their female counterparts, are more likely to be absent from work, to be less productive, and to leave the organization. In addition, men confronted by a sexually hostile environment may lash out against female co-workers, thereby prompting sexual-harassment complaints.

Trying to document a large, invisible mass of harassed men in the work force, however, does not mean advocating a new set of entitlements. On the contrary, recognizing that women are also harassers will help control the hysteria. Public policy, judicial interpretation, and popular sentiment have been swayed by statistics fraught with paradigmatic prejudice and methodological error. It is time for reponsible researchers to begin an objective reexamination of the way that men and women treat each other at work. If the research shows that both men and women are experiencing harassment, then judicial remedy and public policy can be adjusted, and the idea of a harassing class and a victim class can be discarded.

It may also be time to reconsider the extent to which government can or should try to assure a comfortable working environment. People often receive treatment at work they do not like. The problem may lie in how the individual interprets the treatment.

Differing male and female interpretations of harassing behavior led the federal courts to establish the "reasonable woman" standard in 1991. This codified what we have known all along: men and women see things differently.

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According to the ruling, behavior that a man considers acceptable can constitute harassment if it is offensive to a "reasonable woman." In other words, decades of evolving feminist theory have led us back to a Victorian vision of woman; she cannot endure what a man can and must be protected.

Most of the outcry over sexual harassment is not about bosses demanding sex but about men doing and saying things that some women find offensive. Perhaps women are behaving just as offensively, but men have learned to live with it. The real answer to the "hostile environment" problem may be that women should learn to live with it too. □

Subsidies for True Democrats

BUILDING SUPPORT

The National Endowment for Democracy is one federal program conservatives should defend enthusiastically.

PAUL M. WEYRICH

As conservatives confront the responsibilities of governing, a key question will be how to reassert America's leadership in the world. The Contract with America acknowledges the importance of re-establishing a strong national defense by calling for restoration of "the essential parts of our national-security funding."

But protecting American national security involves more than building up our armed forces, however important that is following a period of imprudent retrenchment. We must also come to grips with the continued existence of corrupt and tyrannical regimes that place the United States economic and security interests at risk even as they deny fundamental freedoms to their own people.

Our national security demands that we address the threats posed by these dictatorships through political, not just military, means, by supporting forces for democratic change. Our most effective instrument for doing so is the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), created a decade ago by the Reagan Administration to help advocates of democracy abroad build effective non-governmental organizations and advance the values of freedom.

The NED is based on the recognition that it is essentially a political struggle in which our friends abroad are engaged. They need the resources to help them stand up to ruling authorities and powerfully entrenched interests. In the Middle East, for example, the NED is working with those who offer a democratic alternative to Islamic radicalism. In the case of Communist states such as China and Cuba, it supports networks of dissidents both within those countries and in exile.

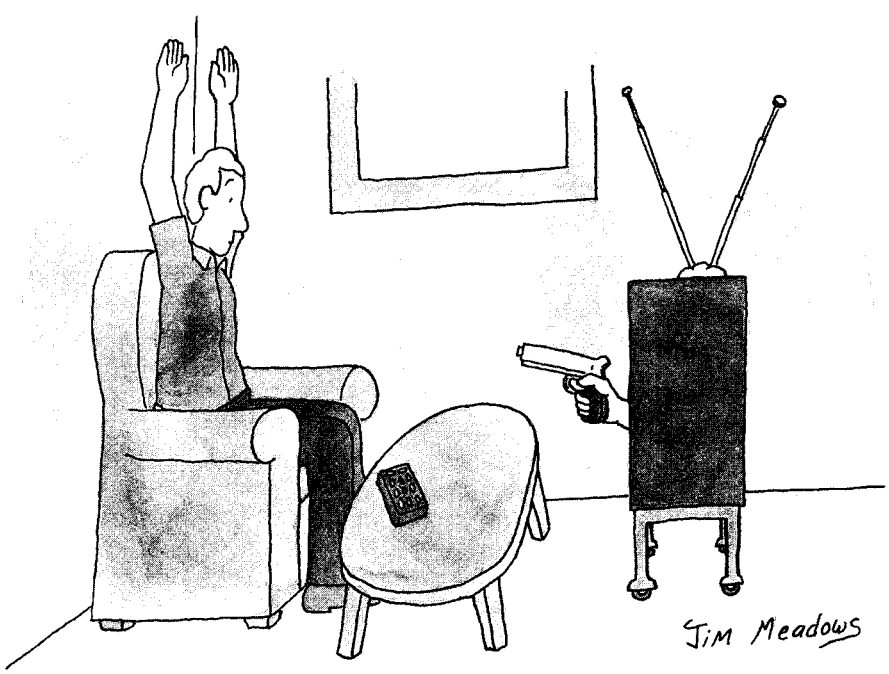
Despite the dramatic changes of the past decade, we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that the oppressive regimes of the Evil Empire have been replaced by anything resembling Western-style democracy. Civil society, obliterated everywhere the Communists were in control, will take years to rebuild. Those who have spent a lot of time in the region—as I have during the last four years, were not surprised to see former Communists return to power in Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania, and understand all too well the fragile state of the former Soviet republics, including Russia itself.

Although the NED has enjoyed bipartisan support, it has also been attacked throughout its life by those, primarily on the Left, who consider it—accurately—a Reagan-era vehicle to project American values abroad. In the 1982 speech to the British Parliament that helped launch the NED, President Reagan declared:

> Our military strength is a prerequisite to peace, but let it be clear we maintain this strength in the hope it will never be used. For the ultimate determinant in the struggle now going on for the world will not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve: the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish, the ideals to which we are dedicated.

In the same speech, the President

Mr. Weyrich is president of the Free Congress Foundation and of the Krieble Institute, which has trained more than 100,000 people in democracy and free enterprise in the former Soviet Union.



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outlined his objective: "to foster the infrastructure of democracy—the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities—which allows a people to choose their own way, to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means." What he was describing was "a hope for the long term—the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism–Leninism on the ash heap of history." Pretty remarkable stuff in 1982, at a time when all the "experts" were saying that none of us would live to see the lifting of the Iron Curtain.

In assessing the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, it should never be forgotten that U.S. non-governmental groups funded by the NED provided a lifeline to the heroes of the people's revolutions—Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, Vitautas Landsbergis, and the others—who brought Communism to its knees. In fact, these leaders were among the scores of democratic activists (including the Dalai Lama and Fang Lizhi) who rose up to support the NED when its existence was threatened in the summer of 1993, convinced that its destruction would be a grave setback to the cause of freedom. (As Landsbergis expressed it, "There is no guarantee that democracy will flower in the soil that was polluted for fifty years by Communism.")

The vast majority of the NED's grants are used to provide indigenous groups with the resources to carry out programs in democratic education, human rights, and respect for the rule of law. Where there is training involved, the NED does not pay the large consultant fees to "development specialists" that have eaten up so much of government-to-government assistance over the years and created resentment among intended beneficiaries. Rather, its training programs are conducted by committed political activists working strictly *pro bono*.

This was precisely how the NED was conceived by Ronald Reagan and the rest of the bipartisan group that created it: not as a government bureaucracy but as a people-to-people program. In fact, the NED fits squarely within the American tradition of using ideas and ideals, especially the ideals of personal liberty and democracy, as channels to the rest of the world. The NED is also encouraging the establishment of pro-democracy entities in countries such as Taiwan, whose own transition to democracy provides an excellent model for Mainland China, the world's most populous country.

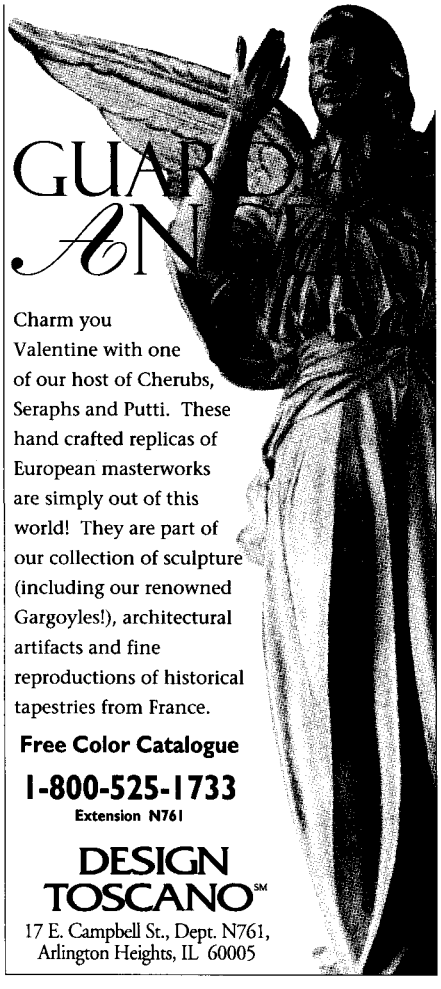
A Program That Works

IT WAS through my own political training work abroad that I first became familiar with the National Endowment for Democracy. I should add that although the Free Congress Foundation has managed two small grants from the NED, I have no personal stake in the program. But I know the NED works, with a cost-effectiveness virtually unheard of among federal programs. (Last year it funded projects in more than eighty countries on a budget of just $35 million.) Only once in my three decades in Washington have I appealed to Congress to support a government spending program. In 1993, Newt Gingrich and I spoke to the House freshmen on behalf of the NED.

Conservatives need to support the NED, not simply because of its origins in the Reagan Administration, but because it reaches out to those who share America's most fundamental values of liberty and economic freedom. We should be bold in cutting unnecessary government expenditures. But when it comes to this program, we should pay heed to the comments on the House floor of Dana Rohrabacher (R., Calif.), a vociferous critic of foreign aid, during last year's debate on the NED's budget:

> This is not about cutting government spending. This is about whether or not we are taking our commitment to democracy, freedom, and human rights seriously. Whether those who long for freedom can look to us, not for a handout, but for leadership, for a commitment.
>
> If we vote to kill NED today, and tomorrow's world turns out to be haunted by despots and dictators, we will have only ourselves to blame.

Finally, let me address those conservatives who acknowledge the useful work being done by the NED but argue for privatizing it. Insofar as it serves a national-security purpose, NED should no more be dependent on private funding than the Pentagon. And to the extent that it embodies our deepest beliefs and values, tying it to corporate and other private donors would diminish its ability to speak on America's behalf. This is one federal program that conservatives should support with enthusiasm. □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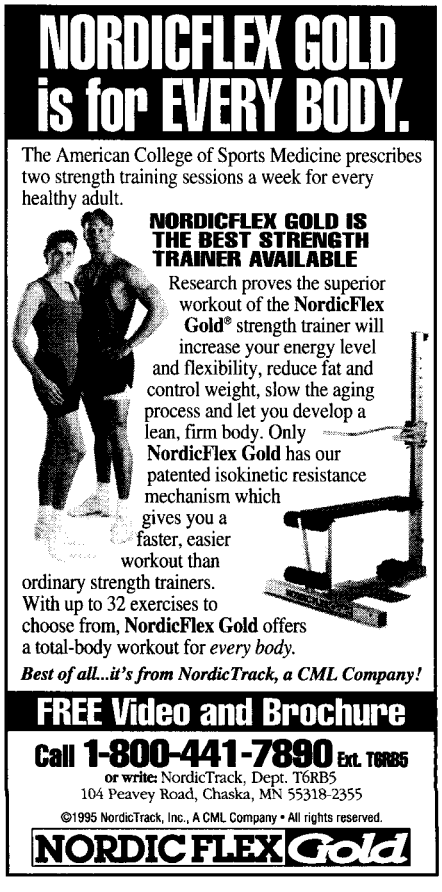
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Why John O'Sullivan Is Wrong

ALIEN NOTION

The debate over immigration policy can proceed without redefining the American identity.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

'A SERIOUS dispute between conservatives has opened up" over immigration policy, John O'Sullivan writes ("America's Identity Crisis," *NR*, November 21). Maybe, but I think not. What could open up is a serious, and potentially unpleasant, dispute over the arguments with which Mr. O'Sullivan overloads his appeal for cutting back on immigration. He asserts that Americans are undergoing an "identity crisis" that can only be resolved by their finally coming to recognize that they are a nation pretty much like other nations "in the European sense." Mr. O'Sullivan rightly insists that there is a distinctively American character. But he wants to expunge from that national character the belief that America is a distinctively open society in a way that is related to our being a "nation of immigrants." The serious dispute that John O'Sullivan perceives or wants to provoke is first about American identity, and secondarily about immigration.

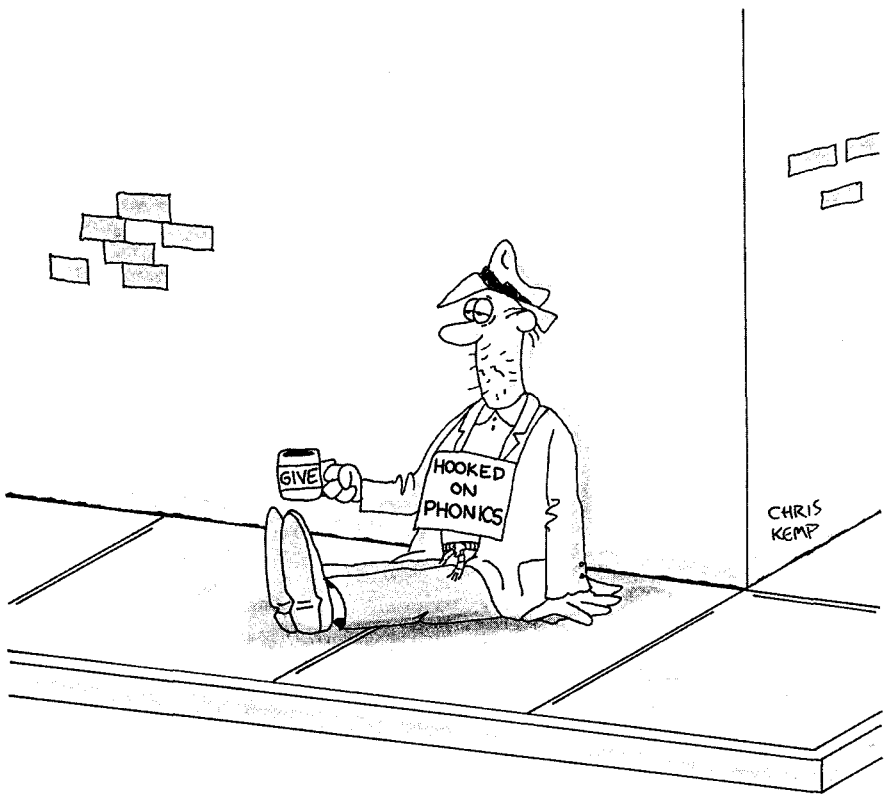
Father Neuhaus is editor-in-chief of First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life.

On immigration, the spectrum of policy possibilities would seem to run from sealed borders and no immigration at all to unpatrolled borders and a welcome to as much of the world's population as wants to come. Aside from some extreme environmentalists and negative-population-growth zealots, nobody favors keeping everybody out, and very few favor letting everybody in. The perfectly legitimate debate, then, is about how many immigrants should be admitted and the criteria for admission. It is a debate that Americans have had from time to time, and if it's time to have it again, there needn't be any alarm about a national "identity crisis" or destructive division among conservatives. Unless the debate is conducted on the basis proposed by Mr. O'Sullivan.

There is overwhelming public support for three general propositions about immigration: the government should be in control of admissions, which means cutting illegal immigration as close as possible to zero; policy should be aimed at preventing immigrants from becoming dependent on welfare; and, against the ideologies of "multiculturalism," immigrants should be encouraged to assimilate. There are disagreements about the specifics of implementation, but those generalizations command very broad support. There may also be strong support for basing admission more on job skills and less on whether a would-be immigrant is a relative of somebody already here. In addition, many Americans might be open to following Canada in requiring that relatives post a bond for immigrants whom they sponsor, to ensure that they stay off welfare. Finally, if the policy is set forth in a coherent manner, Americans will, I believe, continue to support the idea that we should provide safe haven for refugees from political persecution.

All these matters can be more or less calmly debated without escalating into a national "identity crisis." If we're simply talking immigration policy, it is hard to understand the intensity of Mr. O'Sullivan's rhetoric. Unless changes are made, he says, we will be "overwhelmed" by people from other cultures; "the survival of America" is at stake; and so forth. But what changes in immigration policy does John O'Sullivan propose? He is rather vague.

At one point he says we should "reduce the level of legal immigration"; at another he says there should be occasional "pauses or reductions" in immigration to allow time to assimilate prior waves of immigrants. Fair enough. Since few people suggest that



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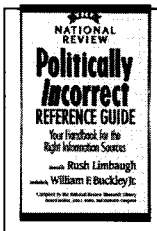

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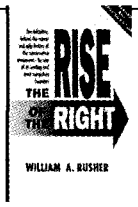

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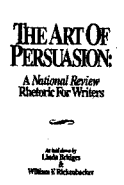

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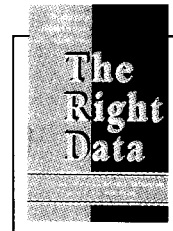

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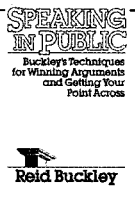

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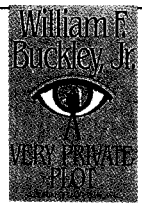

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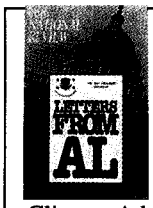

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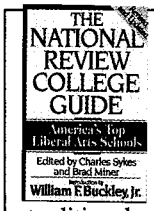
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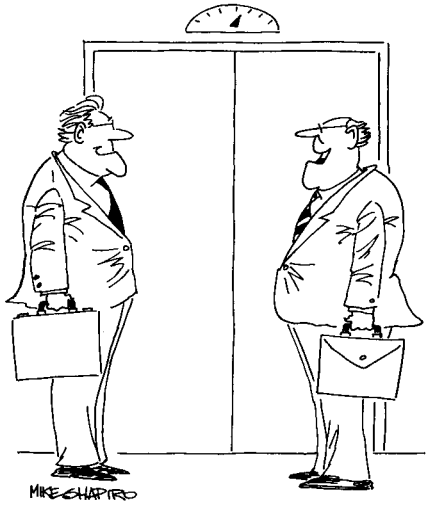
there should be many more immigrants, never mind more illegal immigrants, there would seem to be no reason why we could not have a relatively amicable debate about whether immigration should be maintained at present levels or reduced by a significant amount. Twenty-five per cent? Fifty per cent? And for how long? Before we get to such a debate over legal immigration, however, many Americans might think we should first get control of the illegal influx. In any event, one would hope that the pages of *NR* will be a forum for a full range of arguments on what ought to be done and why.

Redefining Our Character

THE dispute that could become very divisive is not over immigration policy as such but over the "why" offered by Mr. O'Sullivan for the direction that he favors. He proposes a redefinition of the American character that I expect most Americans find neither plausible nor appealing. Further, he blames immigration for some of our major domestic problems, such as multiculturalism and the welfare dependency of the urban underclass, in a manner that distracts attention from wrongheaded policies that are not the fault of immigration or immigrants. In addition, and although it is certainly not his intention, his argument has a high potential for reviving nativist sentiment and reinforcing what is referred to by the rather awkward term "declinism."

Nativism—the exaggerated fear of and scapegoating of immigrants—has a long and ugly history in American life and has in the past politically poisoned some brands of conservatism. Declinism—the belief that the era of "American exceptionalism" is past, that *novus ordo seclorum* is a snare and a delusion, that "morning in America" was a long time ago and will not come again—has usually been located on the Left, but political pathologies have a way of slipping their ideological leashes.

Mr. O'Sullivan rightly says that there is a distinctively American character. St. John de Crèvecoeur observed as much in 1782: "What then is the American, this new man? . . . Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men. . . . The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions." Mr. O'Sullivan, however, appears to believe that what is distinctively American is that Americans are distinctively British. He writes, "Just as Christianity is the universalization of Judaism, so Americanism is the universalization of British culture." To become an American, we are told, is to become, "in effect, a WASP." The United States was "founded by a rebellion against legitimate authority," but its cultural identity is still secured by that authority. The suggestion is that "America's identity crisis" is the result of fits of absentmindedness in which Americans forgot their Britishness and permitted high immigration.



"I don't mind having a demanding job, as long as I'm the one doing the demanding."

Most Americans, certainly not all, agree that we have reason to be immensely grateful to Britain. From Britain we received our language, much of our literature, and many of our most important political, legal, and cultural institutions. Americans, however, may think they have discharged a large part of their debt, not least by rescuing Britain in two world wars and by improving notably upon almost everything received from her. With the exception of some Anglophiles who might feel flattered by the idea, Americans will decline the proposal that they become honorary Brits. This may not be what John O'Sullivan intends, but for as far back as memory serves, European intellectuals have patronizingly urged Americans to grow up and recognize that there is nothing all that special about America. Our British cousins in particular, who have recently lost an empire, may understandably seek to reclaim a greater one lost long ago. But they are likely to find a much warmer welcome here as immigrants than as putative proprietors. The distinctively American experience is not one of preserving British culture for the world, although that may be part of what America has done, in its own way.

Numerous nations and peoples justly claim a proprietorial stake in the American experiment: German, Italian, Irish, Slovak, Jewish, Polish, Chinese, Mexican, and on and on. There is no Anglo copyright on the characteristics that make for assimilation and success in America: hard work, thrift, civic-mindedness, devotion to faith, family, and freedom. The successful third-generation Polish-American is not a WASP but a successful third-generation Polish-American. John O'Sullivan suggests this is self-delusion, that America developed a "myth" by which it persuaded immigrants that "in assimilating to the American nation, they were not being false to themselves." Of course, individuals may have all kinds of moral anxieties about whether they have kept faith with their heritage, but the more general conviction is that in assimilation and success they are being true to themselves and their forebears. It is, after all, why their forebears came here. Surely it can be confusing as one generation eagerly tries to reappropriate the "roots" that were just as eagerly left behind by a prior generation, but that is a typically American confusion. One might almost say that it is a component of the American character.

Like so many liberals (which he certainly is not), John O'Sullivan disapproves of hyphenated Americans. He is pleased that, in response to the Census question about ethnic identity, "a minority of respondents stubbornly identify themselves as simply 'American.' " As Americans they are of course free to do that, but it does defeat the purpose of asking the question, and it does reflect a minority, even an eccentric, view of ethnicity in America. Mr. O'Sullivan believes that America, like every other nation, should move "from cultural to ethnic homogeneity." One has to wonder what ethnic homogeneity might mean in America. He writes that "the conservative view

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of American identity that underlies my argument holds that America is a nation no different from any other—almost."

The qualifying "almost" is necessary, according to O'Sullivan, only because the movement to "ethnic homogeneity" has been "punctuated and slowed down" by periods of mass immigration. This may be an interesting view of American identity, but it is certainly not the conservative view. It is in radical discontinuity with the American self-understanding from the constituting period to the present. And whether it is an interesting view depends upon finding out what "ethnic homogeneity" might mean in the American context. That we should all become WASPs is neither very interesting nor plausible. One might say that the homogeneity of America is in the shared recognition that there are many ethnic identities that, for limited public purposes, are subordinated to a common enterprise. The claim that America is "a nation no different from any other," far from being "the conservative view," is akin to national heresy. *E pluribus unum* does not mean, *contra* Vice President Gore, "Out of the one, many," but just as surely the *unum* does not cancel out the *pluribus*, as in "*E pluribus* WASP."

Evening in America?

TO SPEAK of heresy in this connection is to recall G. K. Chesterton's observation that "America is a nation with the soul of a church." John O'Sullivan says that to speak of America in this way, as an "experiment" or an "idea," is to fall prey to "a brand of ideological, rationalist politics." (The idea of Chesterton as an ideological rationalist seems not quite right.) We have to deal, O'Sullivan insists, not with America as a philosophical conception but with the real America of history, accident, and lived cultural experience. Exactly. Crèvecoeur, Tocqueville, Chesterton, and a host of other perceptive observers attended assiduously to the lived experience of America and came to the conclusion that it could not be explained apart from its understanding of itself as an experiment in the living out of certain ideas—as in "We hold these truths . . ." One thing they were very sure about: that America is not a nation "no different from any other." Maybe they were wrong, but I think not. Maybe that time is past now; maybe American exceptionalism is finished, the experiment has exhausted itself, the time of closure has arrived, and morning in America was yesterday. I hope not.

Mr. O'Sullivan *is* being conservative when he urges us to pay attention to the particularities of the lived experience of a culture and not just to the ideas about it. His list of particularities that distinguish American culture is for the most part unexceptionable: baseball, hamburgers and hot dogs, jeans, etc. (although one wonders how the King James Bible got on the list). He includes the New York skyline, but his vision does not take in, there just off to the side of the skyline, the Statue of Liberty. Nor does he suggest how one might think of New York without reference to mass immigration, past and present—and mass immigration of people who were and are very unlike WASPs. The image of an "immigrant nation" is not an idea imposed upon the lived experience of American culture; it *is* the lived experience of American culture.

All those whom O'Sullivan calls "native Americans" are participants in his elusive concept of America's "ethnic homogeneity." This includes the urban and mainly black underclass. Were it not for immigration, we are invited to believe, they, too, would be further along toward becoming WASPs. Immigration, we are told, is a major factor in reducing wages and creating unemployment for blacks in our inner cities. That this is the line pressed by some sectors of organized labor and by not a few black demagogues does not mean it is wrong, but it does raise cautions. Demagogues who have long blamed white racists for the misfortunes of the underclass should not now be invited to blame immigrants.

It seems very improbable that the devastatingly high rates of non-employment and unemployability among blacks in our inner cities are caused by immigrants taking jobs away from blacks or depressing wage levels. The dysfunctionality, indeed the human catastrophe, of the one-third of black America that is in the underclass cannot be attributed to immigrants or immigration. As Thomas Sowell explains in his most recent book, *Race and Culture*, immigration undoubtedly has both costs and benefits, both of which are hard to calculate, but it is a familiar pattern for less productive members of society to blame ambitious newcomers for their problems.

John O'Sullivan writes, "The evidence of our senses is that areas with a high concentration of immigrants tend also to be areas of ethnic conflict." The examples of conflicts that he cites, however, are ones in which "native American" blacks have been the chief antagonists. Here in New York, the areas of highest concentration of immigrants are places like Elmhurst, Queens. In such areas, as many as fifty or sixty nationalities live together in close proximity, and native-born Americans are almost all under the age of twenty. Elmhurst is a place of relative safety and civility even at midnight, whereas Bedford-Stuyvesant, the area with the city's largest concentration of blacks, is a place of lethal danger any time of day or night. Putting the focus on immigration distracts attention from the real crisis of the urban underclass, a crisis that is, at most, only tenuously related to immigration.

Ready for Lunch?

A FINAL difficulty with O'Sullivan's argument is that it obscures what can be done about very real problems related to immigration. He notes that some argue that the problem is not immigration but immigration in the context of the welfare state and multiculturalism (ethnic quotas, bilingualism, and so on). To those who make that argument, Mr. O'Sullivan responds, "OK, let's make a deal. You abolish the welfare state and multiculturalism, and I'll agree to open borders. Oh, and let's do lunch sometime." Nobody's asking for open borders, but I should have taken him up on lunch on Wednesday, November 9, when it became evident that the American voters were determined to do something about, inter alia, the welfare state and the multiculturalism championed by the counterculture, and that Californians were determined that illegal immigration should be brought under control, an idea with which few Americans would disagree, although they might have problems with the way Proposition 187 proposes to achieve that goal.

In sum, we can have a perfectly civil debate on immigration policy: on

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whether legal immigration should be increased, reduced, or kept as it is, and on whether the terms of admission should be changed, and how. But the debate is not going to go anywhere if it is premised upon a redefinition of the American character along the lines of something called "ethnic homogeneity," and upon a radical break with America's traditional understanding that immigration is closely related to our being a nation singularly open to the possibility and promise of the future.

We do have a very real problem with aliens. These are native-born Americans who are profoundly alienated from the American experience. Our problem is with an indigenous overclass and an indigenous underclass. The overclass, sometimes called the knowledge class, is set upon a multiculturalist Balkanizing of the society, and is adept at exploiting the poor, including immigrants, toward that end. The underclass is composed of fellow citizens who somehow, and nobody knows quite how, must be induced to embrace the responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship. There are also serious questions about immigration policy that should be addressed. But they will not be addressed constructively unless it is recognized that the immigrant, far from being the problem, can today, as in the past, teach our alienated classes—and all of us—what it means to be that ever new thing, an American. □

John O'Sullivan Replies

THERE is a passage in Fr. Neuhaus's response in which he goes off like the rocket's red glare. He accuses me of arguing that what is distinctively American about Americans is that they are distinctively British. He declares that Americans will decline my supposed proposal that they become "honorary Brits." He rebukes me and other (unnamed) British immigrants who would seek a role as "putative proprietors" of the United States. And he reminds me proudly that America twice pulled Britain's chestnuts out of the fire, in 1917 and 1941.

Well, really now. If I did not know Fr. Neuhaus to be a man of the cloth, I would suspect that his girl had run off with an Englishman.

This rodomontade was apparently sparked by the sentence in my original article: "Just as Christianity is the universalization of Judaism, so Americanism is the universalization of British culture." Omitted by Fr. Neuhaus is the sentence immediately following: "And in being universalized that culture *changed* to produce a distinctive American culture and identity." (Emphasis added.) Even without that gloss, the comparison with Christianity and Judaism should surely have told Fr. Neuhaus that I was describing a transformation. Yes, there is a British core to American culture, but it has been enriched by other influences.

Does Fr. Neuhaus accept even this limited view of America's British heritage? Well, sometimes he does, and sometimes he doesn't. On the one hand he concedes that "from Britain we received our language, much of our literature, and many of our most important political, legal and cultural institutions." On the other hand, "numerous nations and peoples justly claim a proprietorial stake in the American experiment: German, Italian, Irish, Slovak, Jewish, Polish, Chinese, Mexican, and on and on . . . The successful third-generation Polish-American is not a WASP but a successful third-generation Polish-American."

Fr. Neuhaus has done his best to please everyone with this inclusive list, but his argument doesn't hold vodka. Americans drawn from "numerous nations and peoples" may certainly make a just claim to a stake in America, having worked, fought, and died for their country. But they have not shaped American identity and culture to anything like the same extent as the original settlers (four-fifths British in 1776). As Arthur Schlesinger—no Brit, honorary or otherwise—has written: "For better or worse, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant tradition was for two centuries—and in crucial respects still is—the dominant influence on American culture and society. This tradition provided the standard to which other immigrant nationalities were expected to conform, the matrix into which they would be assimilated." That is why the stake of any other ethnic group, however impressive, falls short of "proprietorial," and why a successful third-generation Polish-American speaks English and knows more of Shakespeare than of Adam Mickiewicz.

All of this might be a minor footnote in ethnic studies if it were not part of Fr. Neuhaus's larger argument that American identity is neither cultural nor ethnic, but a philosophical commitment (to liberty, political equality, etc.) within which ethnic groups retain their distinctive character: "the homogeneity of America is in the shared recognition that there are many ethnic identities that, *for limited public purposes*, are subordinated to a common enterprise." (Emphasis added.) That is a better definition of multiculturalism than any multiculturalist has ever concocted. And Fr. Neuhaus extends this multicultural logic when he argues that anyone who describes his ethnicity to the Census as simply American is "reflecting a minority, even an eccentric, view of ethnicity in America."

Tell It to TR

IS THIS really the traditional or conservative view of American nationality? Teddy Roosevelt would not have thought so; nor the George Washington who argued that immigrants should be prepared for "intermixture with our people." They would then be "assimilated to our customs, measures and laws: in a word, soon become one people." Since George Washington's "our" people were WASPs, *e pluribus WASP* is an undiplomatic but accurate way of expressing traditional Americanism: namely the assimilation of many peoples into one—the one here first.

Because even WASPs came from somewhere else, Fr. Neuhaus sees mass immigration as essential to the idea of America as "a distinctively open society" and even as "the lived experience of American culture." There is more myth than mystic chords of memory here. Continuing high levels of immigration have *not* been the American experience. As Roy Beck points out in his invaluable *Recharting America's Future* (Social Contract Press), U.S. immigration has been a constant repetition of waves and lulls. Judged over a longer period, there have been five phases: the colonial era (1607–1775), annual average immigration: 3,500; the new nation (1776–1819), annual average: 6,500; continental expansion (1820–1879), annual average: 162,000; the Great Wave (1880–1924), annual average: 584,000; and the era of the rise of the middle class (1925–1965), annual average: 178,000. There have been only two periods of sustained

(Continues on page 80)

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Getting to the Heart of the Matter

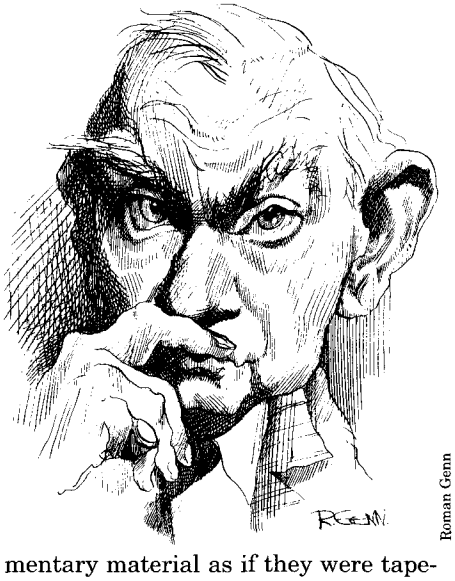
MARTIN STANNARD

THERE has been a race on in the British biography market. Norman Sherry, Graham Greene's official chronicler, discovered he had two competitors: Michael Sheldon and Anthony Mockler. Mockler's threat was initially scotched by Greene's lawyers, with only brief sections of the book appearing in the *Sunday Telegraph*. But both battled on and, encouraged by Greene's death in 1992, threatened to beat Sherry to the post. Sheldon was offering the complete life, Mockler the first of two volumes, stopping at 1945. Given that Sherry was only taking us up to 1955, and that many of the revealing documents were in public hands, something of a panic was on. Release dates got ratcheted back, typesetters performed amazing feats, and all three books rushed breathlessly onto the market, neck and neck.

They offer conflicting public images. Sherry, a meticulous scholar, is respectful and defensive of his subject. Mockler, still anxious that he might be sued, appears unwilling or unable to say what he really thinks. Sheldon's gatecrashing line is that, since no one holds a copyright on his own life, any public figure is fair game. Where Sherry struggles to explain the agony of Greene's divided nature, Sheldon sees Greene as a hypocrite: a professional liar who was an agent for the British secret service until the end of his life. The most serious charge, which Sherry fails to confront, is that Greene's spying undermines his "socialist" credentials. The man who built his reputation upon a defense of the weak is presented as a calculating double agent for the establishment. American readers must wait to evaluate this iconoclasm. In the meantime, they have Professor Sherry's more dignified, and better researched, book to digest.

The Life of Graham Greene, Volume Two: 1939–1955, by Norman Sherry (Viking, 592 pp., $34.95)

Sherry's first tome was cumbersome and his second displays many of the same faults: repetition, verbosity, quagmires of "background" history, and a low level of literary-critical engagement. In both books his biographical method is irritating, centering on the pursuit of "models" for Greene's characters and dovetailing slabs of fictional dialogue or reflection into documentary material as if they were tape-recorded interviews. It might seem odd, then, to say that this book is compelling, much better than Volume One. Why? Partly because Mr. Sherry has abandoned his dogged "And then . . . and then" approach and replaced it with a more "Proustian" indirection, but mainly because the material on which he draws is so much richer.



Roman Genn

Sherry's period here is that of Greene's greatest work: *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951), and *The Quiet American* (1955). In addition, there were two "entertainments"—*The Confidential Agent* (1939) and *The Ministry of Fear* (1943)—a book of short stories, two volumes of essays, children's books, a critical work on British dramatists, a play—*The Living Room* (1953)—which took London by storm, and collaboration on five screenplays, two of which contributed to classics of British cinema: *The Fallen Idol* (1948) and *The Third Man* (1950). This astonishing creative energy was matched by Greene's sexual drive. During these 16 years he separated from his wife and children, had two passionate affairs (with Dorothy Glover and Catherine Walston) and several other flirtations, and made countless visits to prostitutes. As if this weren't enough, he first worked for the Ministry of Information during the war, then as literary editor for *The Spectator*, then for MI-6 in Sierra Leone and the UK, then for the Political Intelligence Department. In the mornings he wrote. In the evenings he fire-watched. His secret-service work was often under the aegis of Kim Philby, who became a close friend and remained one even after his defection to Moscow. Post-bellum, Greene put in four years as a publisher and sought legitimate suicide by actively inviting death in the war zones of Malaya, Vietnam, and Kenya. Couple all this with images of his penis hemorrhaging in a New York hotel after he had downed the best part of a bottle of whisky, Benzedrine-popping to meet crazy deadlines, and "white nights" in opium dens, and it is easy to see why Mr. Sherry has a hell of a story to tell.

"Hell" is the operative word. A consistent image emerges of the man as a tormented dual personality, a loyal traitor to all he loved best, with the striking exception of Catherine Walston. Vivien Greene and Dorothy Glover appear as the walking wounded of his pity. For some time he was visiting his family in Oxford on weekends, living with Dorothy in London, and conducting another affair with Catherine. The only way he could tell Dorothy that their relationship must end was to write her a letter and hand it to her during a holiday. Unable to crush his wife's hope that he would one day return, he cruelly kept her at a distance by explaining the attractions of other women. Once, he even brought Catherine Walston to his wife's house. Vivien Greene—devout, domesticated,

Mr. Stannard's biography of Evelyn Waugh, The Early Years: 1903–1939 *and* The Later Years: 1939–1966, *is published by Norton.*

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anxious, repressed—was struggling with rationing to budget for the children's shoes. And there was Catherine—also married with children and equally devout, but younger, rich, glamorous, reckless with her reputation, clearly besotted by Greene, and, worst of all, in a perfectly cut peach-colored coat. Greene fought against the sentimentality that led him to desire others' happiness while ruthlessly seeking his own pleasures. Inevitably, however, his masochistic "feeling for physical anarchy" and his "adolescent urge to shock" led him to realize that he had "little nerve for peace." In his writings, pity and piety are vilified. In his life, as he admitted, he was a moral coward.

Faced with this, we might resist Sherry's claim that Greene was "always sensitive to another's pain." It is part of the subtlety of this portrait that we don't. Greene was both the man in the mackintosh leering at girls in the Windmill Theatre and the agonized, devoted lover, able only to imitate the actions of the macho male. Everyone agrees that he was shy, a deeply private man who couldn't understand why anyone should love him or revere his work. At the height of his fame his manic depression overwhelmed him with a sense of his worthlessness, the terror of a loveless future. For it was love that he sought. When asked what he most wanted, he replied simply: "To be married to someone." That someone was Catherine Walston, and she wouldn't leave her husband. The paradox on which his longing for peace was wrecked he explained to his wife as an aspect of mental "disease." His was "a character profoundly antagonistic to ordinary domestic life. Unfortunately the disease is also one's material. Cure the disease and I doubt whether a writer would remain."

An artistic parasite on his own misery, Greene craved the drug of his art to deflect melancholy. But there was another paradox which drove him to savor the "odor of decay," to covet failure, death, and empathy with the world's "undesirables." His "sin" with Catherine, he felt, made him a better Catholic. Despite his wealth, his study on Capri "was extremely small with only a skylight and a wooden trestle table of rough unplaned wood." Vivien once offered him an ornate antique desk. No, he said, it would be impossible for him to work on such a thing. For all his wealth, there was something of the ascetic about him. His view of the world was not cynical but deeply imbued with the concept of original sin. Enraged at the 1943 dramatization of *Brighton Rock* (1939), he wrote: "the idea is that Pinkie and Rose belong to the real world in which good & evil exist, but that the interfering Ida belongs to a kind of artificial surface world in which there is no such thing as good & evil but only right & wrong." This is surely the heart of the matter. The path to sanctity lay through sin. Allegiance to the terrestrial rules of right and wrong was irrelevant. The egotistical sublime? The last defense of a traitor? I doubt it. Douglas Jerrold once described Greene as a "dangerous excited child": "The child who, playing with the revolver, wanted sin without the guilt and now, in his maturity, wants the guilt without the sin." Mr. Sherry's book suggests this, too. Perhaps it is the closest we shall approach to Greene's masked and self-destructive personality. □

A Reporter's Revenge

JOHN CORRY

SOMEDAY, in the year 2015, say, the State Department will issue a report very much like the one it issued two years ago, officially recognizing that a number of American war prisoners had once remained captive in a foreign land after the shooting had stopped, even though the enemy refused to admit it. The report two years ago was about the Korean War; the new one, of course, will be about Vietnam. We will close a chapter of history, although by then it is unlikely many people will still care.

That American POWs and MIAs remained in Southeast Asia after they supposedly had all been repatriated in Operation Homecoming in 1973 is no longer open to debate. North Vietnam lied in 1973, just as North Korea and the Soviet Union had lied twenty years earlier. The unresolved question is whether any of the Vietnam MIAs are still alive. Susan Katz Keating insists they are all dead. She once believed there were live MIAs, but too many people deceived her.

Prisoners of Hope: Exploiting the POW/MIA Myth in America, by Susan Katz Keating (Random, 276 pp., $23)

Mr. Corry, a former New York Times *media critic, is the author of* My Times: Adventures in the News Trade *(Grosset/Putnam's).*

Mrs. Keating says that charlatans and frauds perpetuate the MIA issue, mostly to line their own pockets. MIA family members are easy prey. Desperate to learn the fates of sons, husbands, and fathers, they succumb to tricksters who peddle bogus intelligence reports, fake photographs, and imaginative rumors. *Prisoners of Hope* begins with the sad story of Marian Shelton, who committed suicide after years of searching for her husband, a pilot shot down over Laos.

Mrs. Keating confesses that she once succumbed, too. As a young reporter at the *Washington Times* in the 1980s, she was obsessed by the idea that MIAs were still being held in Vietnam. As she forthrightly admits, she thought she might win a Pulitzer Prize if she could prove the existence of live MIAs. Disillusionment set in when she became aware of the tricksters.

Perhaps the best known was James "Bo" Gritz, a former Special Forces officer, who organized four missions to Southeast Asia to rescue American prisoners. He found none. Jack Bailey, a retired Air Force officer, acquired a rusted old ship, and then sent out fundraising letters saying he wanted to save boat people from China Sea pirates. In 1991, he turned up a photograph of an American serviceman supposedly held captive in Laos. The photograph was widely publicized, but it turned out to show not an American serviceman but a German smuggler.

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Gritz, Bailey, and those like them are independent entrepreneurs, running their one-man shows with guile and flamboyance. Mrs. Keating is right to expose them. Others in the MIA scam, she says, are equally reprehensible, although outwardly more respectable. She calls them the "grey flannel Rambos": Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire; Eugene "Red" McDaniel, a retired Naval officer, who was a POW for six years himself; and John LeBoutillier and Billy Hendon, two former Republican congressmen.

Smith, an amiable boob, according to Mrs. Keating, has "built his career on fanning the hopes of MIA families by telling them their loved ones might still be alive." Meanwhile, McDaniel, who runs the American Defense Institute, "has made greater gains in fundraising than in learning the truth about MIAs." LeBoutillier has found his "niche in POW activism," although he is now no more than a mere "telephone solicitor." Undeterred by his narrow escape from prosecution for a misguided attempt to arm Laotian mercenaries, he has raised funds for new MIA ventures.

And Hendon, Mrs. Keating claims, is the "greatest troublemaker" of all, whose "imagination and stamina far outshine that of his fellows."

When Mrs. Keating first talked to Hendon, in 1985, she says, he promised to let her in on "the next Watergate." This turned out to be a report that three MIAs were on their way out of Laos. But they never appeared, and in the days to come, Mrs. Keating writes, Hendon forgot all about them. He did go on, though, courting reporters (including Mrs. Keating), badgering government officials, and apparently promising more than he could ever deliver.

Prisoners of Hope pays the grey flannel Rambos back. They are depicted as either fools or knaves, motivated only by self-interest. The possibility that they might actually believe in their cause simply never arises. Mrs. Keating gives not an inch, and it is obvious she is on a mission: to prove the MIAs are all dead.

Mrs. Keating, however, is extraordinarily selective in her reporting. She notes, for example, that the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs concluded in 1992 that no Americans had been willfully abandoned in Southeast Asia, but she declines to mention

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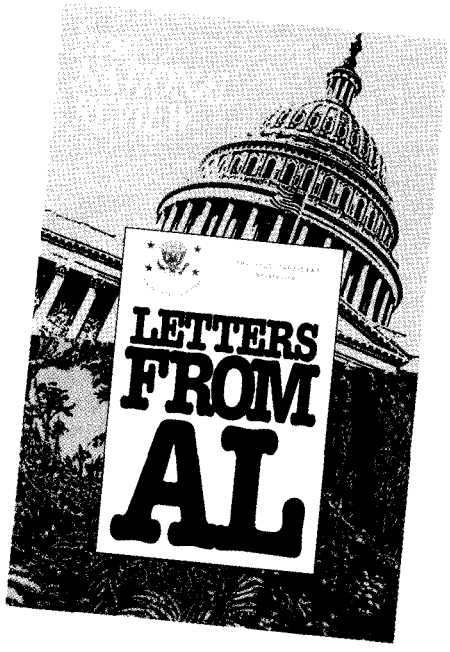

Letters from Al, the *NR* Collection of Vice Presidential "Gorespondence"

"Letter from Al"—the hilarious *National Review* regular column featuring correspondence from Vice President Al Gore to his rain forest-dwelling pen pal "Rusty" (every other week he gets a too-funny and too-*true* rundown on Bill, Hillary, and the inner bumblings of the Clinton White House)—may be the *only* excuse for wishing "four more years" for you know who. Indeed, "Letter from Al" has proven such a hit that the first 25 Veep epistles are now available in a handsome, softcover collection: **Letters from Al**. It's funny, affordable (*only* $8.95, which covers *all* shipping and handling charges!), and available directly from *NR*. **Letters from Al** is something you'll definitely want to get for yourself, or as a gift for that special someone who appreciates unsurpassed political humor. Gore your funnybone—get your copies of **Letters from Al** *today*.

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the finding of the committee's intelligence investigators. The investigators, who, for technical reasons, worked with intelligence reports that extended only through 1989, found "that American prisoners of war have been held continuously after Operation Homecoming and remain[ed] in captivity in Vietnam and Laos as late as 1989."

What Mrs. Keating cannot explain she ignores. *Prisoners of Hope* is porous. The grey flannel Rambos have always insisted that we left hundreds of men in Vietnam and not merely the handful of men we now unofficially acknowledge we left in Laos. Their case rests on the not implausible assumption that at least some may still be alive. But Mrs. Keating declines to discuss numbers. If she did, it would weaken her argument.

A North Vietnamese military doctor who defected to the South in 1971 told American officials that Hanoi was holding hundreds more prisoners than it had acknowledged. Then, in 1979, another Vietnamese Communist defector said that after Operation Homecoming, Vietnamese officials talked about retaining seven hundred prisoners as "bargaining assets." The figure of seven hundred cannot be dismissed. In 1993, Stephen J. Morris, a Harvard scholar, disclosed that he had found in Communist Party archives in Moscow a Russian translation of a 1972 North Vietnamese report that said Hanoi was holding 1,205 American prisoners—614 more than it freed the next year. Shortly afterward, the Pentagon itself released the translation of an account of a Vietnamese Communist Party meeting held in either late 1970 or early 1971. It quoted a Vietnamese official as saying that Hanoi held 735 "American aviator POWs," although it had acknowledged holding only 368.

Prisoners of Hope, however, mentions only the report found by Mr. Morris—in the epilogue, where it is summarily dismissed as a CIA forgery. Mrs. Keating may insist the MIAs are all dead, but she gives us no real reasons to believe her. Mostly she seems to want to get even with the people who once deceived her. □

A Very Nice Boy

TERRY TEACHOUT

ALL SLOPES are slippery. Forty years ago, columnists and clergymen were tearing their hair over Elvis Presley, whose televised hip-swiveling was contemptuously compared by the *New York Times* to "the repertoire of the blonde bombshells of the burlesque runway"; today, MTV pumps gangsta rap and heavy metal into the homes of millions of teenage suburbanites, and nobody, least of all the *Times*, hoists an eyebrow. As for Elvis, I caught him on the Disney Channel just the other night, looking (and sounding) as innocent as Glenn Miller. The French, as usual, were wrong: the more things change, the worse they get.

Peter Guralnick's *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*, the first installment of a two-volume biography of the founding father of rock and roll, seeks to strip away four decades of celebrity and show the young Elvis as he was: "I wanted to rescue Elvis Presley from the dreary bondage of myth, from the oppressive aftershock of cultural significance." Not altogether surprisingly, Guralnick's Elvis comes out looking very much like the Elvis still beloved of countless middle-aged Southerners, the soft-spoken young man who adored his parents, said "sir" and "ma'am," and spoke unabashedly to suspicious big-city journalists of his religious beliefs: "My Bible tells me that what he sows he will also reap, and if I'm sowing evil and wickedness it will catch up with me. I'm right sure of that, sir, and I don't think I'm bad for people. If I did think I was bad for people, I would go back to driving a truck, and I really mean this."

Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley, by Peter Guralnick (Little, Brown, 560 pp., $24.95)

Guralnick's book is an oddity: a perfectly serious, even scholarly biography of a rock star. Thorough but not pedantic, stylish but not overheated, *Last Train to Memphis* is easily the best thing I've read about the early years of rock, not least because its author takes for granted the significance of his subject. Instead of battering the reader with roll-over-Beethoven comparisons, Guralnick simply assumes that Elvis Presley was a man whose story is worth telling, and goes about telling it with considerable grace and sensitivity. Unusually for a non-Southerner, he has a real feel for the texture of Southern life, and painstakingly avoids condescension, even about religious matters. The keynote of this excellent book, indeed, is sympathy:

> I don't know if I ever thought about the real Elvis Presley until I was driving down McLemore Avenue in South Memphis one day in 1983, past the old Stax studio, with a friend named Rose Clayton. Rose, a native Memphian, pointed out a drugstore where Elvis's cousin used to work. Elvis used to hang out there, she said; he would sit at the soda fountain, drumming his fingers on the countertop. "Poor baby," said Rose, and something went off in my head. This wasn't "*Elvis Presley*"; this was a kid hanging out at a soda fountain in South Memphis, someone who could be observed, just like you or me, daydreaming, listening to the jukebox, drinking a milk shake, waiting for his cousin to get off work. "Poor baby."

It is impossible to understand Elvis Presley without understanding the dizzying speed with which the kid at the soda fountain became the most famous man in America. Born in 1935 to a white-trash family in Mississippi, Presley cut his first record in 1954, made his first network TV appearance in 1956, and began on his first movie eight months later. Raw talent is not enough to explain that kind of instant success, though the talent was definitely there: Presley had a rich, resonant voice and natural acting abilities that impressed everyone who encountered him when he first came to Hollywood. Said Walter Matthau, who co-starred in *King Creole*, Presley's fourth movie: "I almost hesitate, I creep up to the sentence, 'He was an

Mr. Teachout is the editor of A Second Mencken Chrestomathy, *just out from Knopf.*

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instinctive actor.' Because that almost is a derogation of his talents. . . . he was quite bright, too. He was very intelligent. Also, he was intelligent enough to understand what a character was and how to play the character simply by being himself *through* the means of the story."

No one should have been surprised that Elvis Presley could act. A painfully shy boy who only came to life behind his guitar, Presley carefully cultivated the young-punk image that enraged his elders: "I don't know anything about Hollywood, but I know you can't be sexy if you smile. You can't be a rebel if you grin." But his contemporaries saw through the half-sullen, half-ebullient exterior to the vulnerable boy-man within. So did Sam Phillips, the producer of Presley's first recordings: "He tried not to show it, but he felt so *inferior*. He reminded me of a black man in that way; his insecurity was so *markedly* like that of a black person." It is this endearing insecurity that comes through vividly in the surviving films of Presley's youthful public appearances, and to which his audiences responded so powerfully. Small wonder teenage girls flocked to him. For all his frank sexuality, it was their budding maternal urges to which he spoke most directly, then as now.

Last Train to Memphis ends in 1958 on the day Private Elvis Presley gloomily boarded a troop ship for Germany to join the Third Armored Division, certain his fans would forget him by the end of his two-year hitch. Instead, he forgot himself, spending the remaining 19 years of his life plumbing the depths of personal and artistic squalor. Fame and fortune overwhelmed Presley, and he collapsed under the weight of his fans' expectations. His records and movies became synonymous with shoddiness; supermarket tabloids reveled in tales of his drug-sodden carousing. Buried beneath the rubble of renown was the real Presley, the mama's boy from the Memphis housing projects who liked everything from gospel to Mario Lanza and whose unaffected sweetness of character won over no less hardboiled a customer than Ed Sullivan: "I wanted to say to Elvis Presley and the country that this is a real decent, fine boy . . . we want to say that we've never had a pleasanter experience on our show with a big name than we've had with you." Poor baby, indeed. □

And the Moral Is . . .

JAMES BOWMAN

IN THE MOVIE *Speechless*, which claimed unconvincingly to be about two rival political speechwriters who fall in love, one of the two explains to the other how a speech arrives at its payoff: "What is the *yaseetimmie*?"

"The what?"

"You know how, at the end of an episode of *Lassie*, some adult would always explain what it all meant? Timmie's mom, or uncle, or just a friend would sit him down and say: 'You see, Timmie . . .' " What followed would be the moral of the story. The speechwriter's theory is that, for a political audience, the *yaseetimmie* has to be as strongly marked as it was in the old TV shows.

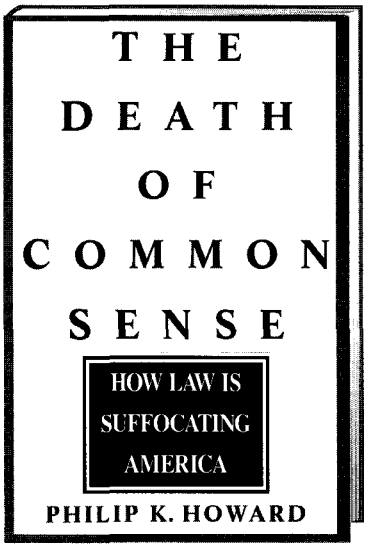
Not often are the connections between American television and American politics pointed out so usefully. Both are characterized by a simple moralism which may or may not have anything to do with the way that those who preach it actually live their lives but whose canons are treated with a reverence once reserved for Scripture. The "working people" of this country and their "families" who "play by the rules" in striving for "the American dream" know already that they are enrolled in the Book of Life along with the patriarchs, but for forty years network television has been adapting the techniques of popular preaching, inherited from our Puritan forebears, for new constituencies.

That is the picture which emerges from this excellent new book. It is, among other things, a walk down memory lane for baby-boomers and

Mr. Bowman is American Editor of the Times Literary Supplement.

Prime Time: How TV Portrays American Culture, by S. Robert Lichter, Linda S. Lichter, and Stanley Rothman (Regnery, 478 pp., $22.95)

"This is one of the most important, thought-provoking books I've read in years," says Andrew Tobias. "It will grip you from the very first page."



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RANDOM HOUSE

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others who remember the peculiar charms of television in the good old "vast wasteland" days. Return with us to yesteryear, the authors seem to say, and relive the glories of *The Bob Cummings Show*, *Father Knows Best*, and *Sergeant Bilko*, plus such forgotten but influential shows as *Navy Log* or *I Remember Mama.*

This conservative Paradise Lost

> was dominated by the private lives of traditional families and the protection of society by high-minded law-enforcers. It was a world in which social institutions worked, and political concerns rarely intruded into the private lives of the populace. The military assured our national security, and the churches looked after our spiritual values. Moral codes were clear cut and transgressors were punished.

It was not to last. Beginning with an exhaustive study of the opening of the 1992–93 prime-time season, the authors proceed at length and in detail through a television history of several major themes—sex, families, work, race, crime and the law, and the portrayal of women, businessmen, professionals, and the military.

It will come as no surprise to conservatives that the authors' polling supports their intuitive sense that "the social values expressed on prime time reflect the personal perspectives of television's creators" and that today those perspectives are politically and socially much more liberal than the attitudes commonly found among the population at large. The authors also helpfully confirm, with respect to television producers, Michael Medved's insight, in his book *Hollywood vs. America*, about movie producers: that even the most crassly commercial of them want to be thought of not as rich and clever showmen with a nose for what will please the suckers but as *hommes sérieux*—artists who grapple meaningfully with the great issues of the day.

Yet the Lichters and Rothman are themselves involved in a similar sort of intellectual gentrification when they eschew the Grub Street label of critic in favor of a pretense of "scientific" measurement with the technique known as "content analysis." What the science comes down to is an assertion that a select bunch of critics and interpreters who sliced up TV programs into small enough pieces managed to agree 80 per cent of the time on what the pieces were intended to convey. We are not told on what principle, if any, the critics were selected, or even how many of them there were, let alone their breakdown by age, sex, race, or literary training. And in the end what do they have to tell us that we do not know already? Every honest viewer has recognized for years that the culture of the TV sitcom is essentially feminist, anti business, anti establishment, anti tradition, and pro, above all else, "diversity."

Moreover, any critic knows how easy it would be to argue the case that it is none of these things. The authors do not recognize that even 80 per cent agreement about a contextual tendency does not amount to scientific demonstration. Eighty per cent of readers must once have thought that *Moby Dick* was about whaling. Criticism is an art, not a science—and an art at which the authors, when they put aside their putatively scientific apparatus, turn out to be rather good.

Their sensible and judicious discussion of the tricky business of plots and themes is for the most part wholly convincing, but the book would have been improved by addressing more unashamedly some of the knottier critical issues it raises. Might the irreverent and anti-establishment predisposition of TV, for example, have to do less with liberal producers than with their medium's reduction of the mighty of the earth to the size of puppets in an electronic Punch-and-Judy show? Why do writers and directors insist that violence and sordidness is more representative of "the real world" than the sort of boring but indisputably familiar stuff that Ozzie and Harriet used to get up to?

Above all, is there any alternative to the *yaseetimmie* as the industry's means of reaching an audience mass enough to pay its way? Like Michael Medved's, this book is likely to be used by those who believe that, because the entertainment industry is full of liberal propaganda (which of course it is), we will naturally want to prescribe a countervailing dose of conservative propaganda in order to return to something like that supposedly apolitical Eden of the 1950s. Where does that leave those who dislike all propaganda? Probably in a state of irrelevancy, though we may hope that one day some Newt Gingrich of the airwaves will at least make television's *yaseetimmie* a more honest one than it is today. □

FILM

Natural Nellegance

JOHN SIMON

IT WOULD be hard to find a more self-serving, fatuous, and totally useless film than ***Nell***, co-produced by its star, Jodie Foster, as the ultimate ego trip. It deals with a young girl, Nell, who grows up in the Carolina wilderness. The only language she speaks is something private and incomprehensible she has derived from the speech of her mother. (Being illegitimate, she had no father around.) This mother had had a stroke, and spoke a kind of gibberish—rather like that mumbled after a stroke by Sir Anthony Hopkins in *Legends of the Fall*, which, along with *Mixed Nuts*, is one of the two foulest of the current crop of movies.

The genesis of *Nell* was this: "In 1989, producer Renée Missel [Miss Foster's partner] saw a Los Angeles production of a play entitled *Idioglossia*, written by Mark Handley, and fell in love with its lead character, the beautiful and mysterious Nell." This sentence from the press kit tells it all. I have no access to the original play, but I think I can reconstruct it from the distorting mirror of what has now been Fosterized into *Nell*, quite a leap from *Idioglossia*, which, of course, would spell instant death on the marquee and at the box office.

I would guess that the play concerned the efforts of a dedicated doctor to unscramble the idiolect of a wild child, and, by teaching her regular speech, save her from growing up ab-

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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surd. Idioglossia is defined by the *OED* as "a form of dyslalia in which the person affected consistently makes substitutions in his speech sounds to such an extent that he seems to speak a language of his own." (In case "dyslalia" is a problem, it means "derangement or impediment of speech.") I shouldn't be surprised if this was in fact a two-character play, somewhat on the order of *The Miracle Worker*, but language therapy in an age without unified language wouldn't play at your neighborhood Loew's or Cineplex. The movie, co-scripted by Mr. Handley and William Nicholson, doubtless to the specifications of its star, does indeed include dyslalia and its treatment by the enlightened country doctor, played by Liam Neeson, but only as wrapped in much other stuff and fluff.

First, there is the glorification of Miss Foster. She gets to play the heroine as a teenager ("My, Jodie, how young you look!"), as a savage child of nature ("My, Jodie, what an adorably puckish free spirit you are!"), as a beautiful nymph swimming merrily in the nude ("My, Jodie, what a terrific, youthful body you have!"), as an innocent who has to be shown what the male body looks like by having Neeson strip in front of her ("My, Jodie, how generously you share that gorgeous hunk with the rest of us!"), and still letting Mr. Neeson have an affair with and eventually marry the second-lead female, played by Natasha Richardson, his real-life spouse ("My, Jodie, how selflessly you allow the hunk to marry someone more suitable in the end!"), with the couple all but adopting Nell into the bosom of their growing family as a Foster child.

Several things, to use a linguistic trope, do not parse here. Nell's mother's corpse is discovered by a delivery boy bringing groceries to the isolated cottage in the woods where mom lived the hermit's life with the wild love child she hid from the civilized world. But do hermits usually dwell within range of bicycling delivery boys? We need this boy so that he can become, first, one of a couple of gapers spying on Nell bathing in the nude (Susanna and the Juniors?), and later, when she is brought into town and wanders into a pool hall, for a dramatic near-rape scene at the hands of these boys and their fellow lounge lizards, with Neeson coming to the last-moment rescue. Having played a rape

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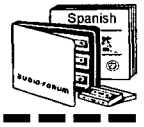

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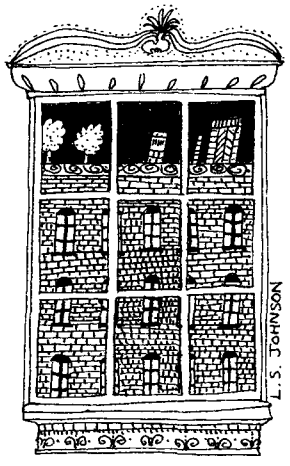
victim in *The Accused*, Miss Foster knows that rape sells a lot better than dyslalia.

But let us not sell dyslalia short. The handicapped—or, more politically correctly, the otherwise enabled—are hot commodities these days. Especially those handicapped in speech in these times when Standard English is considered a needless affront to practitioners of street English, black English, or bilingualism (i.e., Spanish). So the movie ends with an epilogue captioned "Five Years Later," in which Mr. Neeson and Miss Richardson come back to visit the more or less cured Miss Foster—it is not quite clear how well she has mastered Standard English—and she takes their eldest daughter out to the lake where she herself used to swim mother-neckid (and, for aught we know, still does, since she chooses to live on in that, to be sure very accessible, wilderness) and teaches her the same nonsense ditty she herself sang in her pre-Neeson days, an ending that can be read as the apotheosis of bilingualism.



The Michael Apted movie is well shot in gorgeous locations by Dante Spinotti, but the most interesting thing about it is that its co-scenarist was William Nicholson, best known as writer of both the play and film versions of *Shadowlands*. The hero of that is the same C. S. Lewis who in his book *Studies in Words* warned about verbicide, the murder of correct language—the very thing *Nell* is rather equivocal about. It was made by Miss Foster's production company, Egg Pictures, and it certainly has laid a big one.

■ And speaking of big ones, there is Robert Altman's ***Ready to Wear*** (formerly *Prêt-à-porter*), a picture that only the director's mother could love. Correction: though almost all reviewers, even those who habitually slobber over Altman, considered it one of his rare failures ("rare"?—well, perhaps in the sense of "outstanding," as in "O rare Ben Jonson!"), a few diehards could be found who actually endorsed this ordure. It is the kind of movie made by a subliterate megalomaniac who has been sufficiently adulated by critics from Pauline Kael on down to believe that whatever he does is ipso facto magisterial. Failures could always be ascribed to his being ahead of his time.

In *Ready to Wear*, Mr. Altman and his co-scenarist, a certain Barbara Shulgasser—about whom the press kit keeps strangely mum—apparently intended a satirical exposé of the *couture* (sorry, we have to translate into English, so *fashion*) business, in much the same way as *The Player*, one of Altman's most undeserved hits, was supposedly lampooning Hollywood. But it should be clear to a 10-year-old that, if you are going to send up Hollywood, you do not enlist some of its biggest names to play bit parts in your movie, just as if you are going to mock the fashion industry, you do not litter the screen with some of the famous Paris and Milan designers, not to mention some of Tinseltown's best-dressed stars. The formula for such moviemaking is: Get yourself some thirty big names from film and fashion, include the latest designs from the willing fashion houses (the *really* big ones declined), and then pretend to laugh at them (Pretend-à-porter?) in such a way that it draws no blood. Blood stains would be hard to remove from all that costly high fashion.

For high fashion it is, despite the deceptive title, *Prêt-à-porter*, further diluted into *Ready to Wear*. People might be less eager to see Sophia Loren, Lauren Bacall, and Kim Basinger in mere ready-to-wear, but *Couture* doesn't have as good a ring to it as *Prêt-à-porter*, still less so if it had been translated into *Fashion*, a title that would suggest something you could pick up from the neighborhood tailor.

Ready to Wear lasts well over two hours, even though it wears out its welcome after ten minutes. In typically grandiose Altman fashion, it tries to tell half a dozen stories simultaneously, and does justice to none. As typically, it began as a much longer movie that was then frantically whittled down, leaving its truncated plot elements uneasily jostling, when not downright fighting, one another.

Even worse than the movie's disjointedness is its tastelessness. Thus several characters step into dog excrement (a gag to gag on); thus the aging stars, Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren, are assigned a bedroom scene in which, after Mastroianni has let out several wolf howls at the partially disrobed Miss Loren, he falls asleep as she tries to crawl into bed with him—a scene that could give *coitus interruptus* a bad name; and thus, in the end, high-fashion models parade down the runway starkers, suggesting that *haute couture* is really the Emperor's New Clothes. To make the point still more obvious, Altman cuts to tiny tots gamboling sans clothes, a typical example of his muddleheadedness. For if high fashion is no different from female nudity, and that in turn no different from infant nakedness, the whole thing is really innocent, which is hardly what a satire should be telling us.

And the last straw is the pusillanimity with which the title was translated at the eleventh hour, because puzzled people were pronouncing *porter* as if it were a dark beer, so that it now appears both in English and in French, a two-headed monster like its producing company, Miramax, headed by Bob and Harvey Weinstein. To carry two-headedness even further, the cinematography is by two cut-rate cameramen, Pierre Mignot and Jean Lépine, who make shots that should be sharp and stylish look as fuzzy as the thinking behind this hapless venture. □

SOUND ON DISC

King Louis

RALPH DE TOLEDANO

IF THERE was ever one man who embodied the best and most of jazz, it was Louis Armstrong. Every jazz musician during Armstrong's lifetime was influenced by him in phrasing, improvisation, melodic invention, or a moving and lifting beat. Coleman Hawkins was a routine

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player with a big tone until—like the other musicians who had heard Armstrong on his great Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings and then welcomed him to Harlem—the Armstrong inspiration seized him. Listen very closely to one of the greatest jazz drummers—Sid Catlett, who could build up the tension and the swing in a small band or a large one—and you will understand how he got his beautiful sense of the push-and-tug of the syncope from the young Satchelmouth. Contemplate the economy of the trumpet-style piano that Earl Hines developed, and compare his playing to that of the other sidemen in early bands.

The thing to wonder at is that Armstrong always had it, as far as we can tell from recordings. Indeed, from the first time he put mouthpiece to lips, in the waifs' band in New Orleans, he convinced professionals and audiences of his gift. Perhaps only Mozart, in the realm of what we call the "classical," was so instantly endowed.

Louis Armstrong had it all, and more. Minnie the Moocher had a heart "as big as a whale"—but Armstrong's was bigger than that. It was made up of his love for the music, his love for the people who loved the music, and, if I am not putting too fine a point on it, his love for living and being. That love survived even in the midst of those contemporaries among his people who demanded class struggle, class hatred, and reverse racialism. The elites who were washed in the blood of Karl Marx carried within them an abiding suspicion of Louis Armstrong.

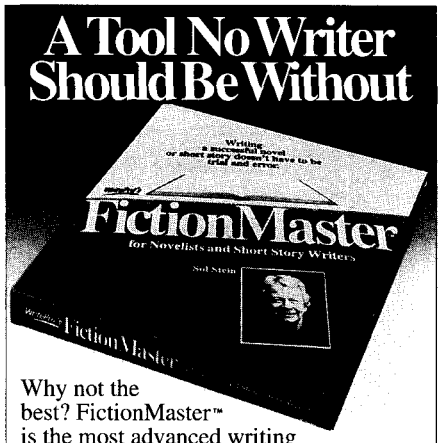
Louis Armstrong went his way, wanting no part of those who sneered because he did not involve himself in civil-rights battles; and when he went to Hollywood, he refused to apologize for his friendship with Bing Crosby, one of the few on the Coast who knew what jazz was all about—or for his other *ofay* friendships. He accepted the genuine affection and admiration in his friend Jack Teagarden's remark, "I'm a pansy for the jigs." Armstrong could be puckish at times. Just out of college, I arranged to interview him when he was preparing to open at one of those brassy Times Square nightclubs. I was full of serious questions about jazz and life, but he was not in the mood and his answer to every one was to laugh and slap me on the knee and say, "Hiya, man!"—as good an answer to my pretensions as any. He also had a sense of humor which projected itself into mispronouncing the lyrics of such Tin-Pan-Alley fodder as "I'm Shooting High," to which he gave a somewhat scatological accent.

In those days, the early Armstrong records were not available. We knew them by reputation, but we had one of his greatest records, "West End Blues," with its plangent playing and scatting, backed by the piano of "Fatha" Hines. In time, other recordings of those great early dates would be reissued—and with the advent of the compact disc, we have them all. Now the Smithsonian, which has done so much to bring back the great classic jazz of the Twenties and Thirties, has wrapped up the early Armstrong in a great package of four CDs: *Louis Armstrong: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, 1923–34.* What a treasure trove!

Comparing these recordings to Armstrong's last performance, at the National Press Club, is more than an interesting exercise. He was not well at the time, and he had been told by his doctor to sing one song and then sit down. He played and sang for the whole evening—and at his next and final public appearance played not at all. But that night in Washington, loving his audience and being loved as well, he and his playing were as young and fertile as ever. We issued the tapes of that performance on an LP, and it will probably be reissued on a CD by Chiaroscuro, a label that has given us much fine jazz. The Smithsonian collection and that last album span more than half a century of Louis Armstrong. The records speak for art and genius, but they also say, "Hiya, man!"

■ I have from time to time been less than complimentary about Maria Callas, commenting on her tendency to sharp and her over-dramatization. But I confess that when you actually see Miss Callas as she performs, you succumb to her, much as our parents and grandparents were seduced by, say, Sarah Bernhardt. My mother, who had seen Mme Bernhardt chew the scenery in her Paris days, would nevertheless relive the excitement even in describing it. Maria Callas made up in

Mr. Toledano's classic essay collection, Frontiers of Jazz, *has been reissued by Pelican Publishing Company in Gretna, Louisiana.*



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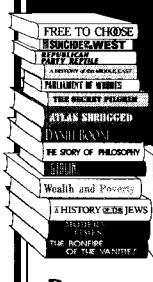
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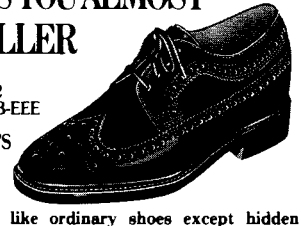
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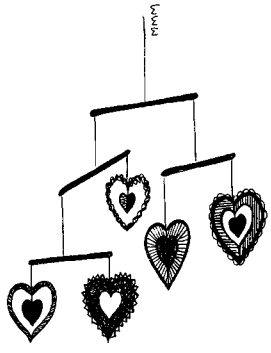
volume what she lacked in subtlety. But a new VHS cassette, *Maria Callas at Covent Garden, 1962 and 1964*, which EMI has given us, is an experience, as she runs through arias from Verdi, Bizet, and Puccini. She was a great actress, and that, too, is part of what opera is about. □

ART

Lost in the Male

JAMES GARDNER

BLACK PEOPLE, contrary to popular belief, don't exist. That is the message of "Black Male," the latest no-brainer at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Well, it isn't actually stated in so many words. Instead, curator Thelma Golden, who is herself black and thus should really know better than to doubt her own existence, begins her virulently trendy catalogue with the following "challenging" observation: "One of the greatest inventions of the twentieth century is the African-American male—'invented' because black masculinity represents an amalgam of fears and projections in the American psyche which rarely conveys or contains the trope of truth about the black male's existence."



This tactic derives from deconstructionist philosophy and can be called the "invention" motif. It has been invoked most recently in George Chauncy's otherwise useful *Gay New York*, a history of pre-war gay life in the Big Apple. He argues that homosexuals did not exist until some time after World War II, because, he asserts, the concept and the word did not exist in any significant way before then. Somehow it is pleasing to certain minority members to treat language as the decisive shaper of reality, and thus to conclude that, because language is infinitely malleable and changeable, "reality" must be the same.

Obviously the hope of those who resort to this tactic is not only to subvert serious discourse on any given subject, but also to pretend to a coolly philosophical detachment from the chaotic welter of human affairs. "Black masculinity," Miss Golden asserts, "suffers not just from overrepresentation, but oversimplification, demonization, and (at times) utter incomprehension." In fact, the true aim of "Black Male" is to replace one oversimplification with another. Its point, as I understand it, is to argue that no black youth ever committed a crime, ever played basketball, or ever listened to rap, precisely because whites believe black males do so, and because whites, being congenitally incapable of understanding the black experience, must be wrong in absolutely everything they think about it.

Several of the works in the show, by white artists as well as black, were last seen two years ago in the same spots at the Whitney Biennial—and they still look stupid. We had hoped, for example, that we should not be seeing more of Gary Simmons's *Lineup*, representing the markers before which suspects stand in order to be identified by victims. In front of the lines are several pairs of large, gold-painted sports shoes. The message here, that blacks are invariably misrepresented as sports-obsessed criminals, is, let us admit it, a pretty mediocre premise for a work of art. One rather amusing, if artistically insignificant work is Carl Pope's purported trophy collection of the Marion County Sheriff's department: Atop one trophy stands a policeman firing a gun, made of plastic, which also is covered in garish gold paint. The trophy carries the legend: "First place to Officer John W. Isom for the Police Action Killing of Pedro Sanchez 1986." Then, of course, there is the obligatory black-homosexual angle, represented by the nudes of Lyle Ashton Harris and Robert Mapplethorpe, whose 1980 exhibit, "Black Males," gave its name to the present show.

What is really going on here? This show, and all others like it, start with the premise that there is a social problem resulting from ignorance and that it must be combatted through public art exhibitions. And yet, the demographics of the Whitney's attendance are such that only three sorts of people will visit this show. First there is the liberal art establishment, who constitute the bulk of the Whitney's audience and who will be quite sure they don't need instruction in the right attitudes. Yet they will praise the Whitney's "courageous" stance and imagine that the show will do wonders for others less enlightened than themselves.

Then there are members of the upper middle class, whose love of Modernism, if I may indulge in stereotype, starts with the Impressionists and usually gets no further than an Alexander Calder mobile. These viewers will fret that the show is too political, will not recognize that it has any possible relevance to them, and by the time they reach Sarabeth's Kitchen in the bowels of the Whitney, will have forgotten all about it.

Finally, there are the busloads of inner-city youths whom the Whitney loves to bring in on such occasions, partly to prove to them that museums aren't stuffy and that art can be "fun," but mostly to boost the figures of black attendance which they can then show to the relevant funding organizations. These children will be greeted by some fashionably attired docent, well-meaning but slightly uncomfortable, who will introduce them to the joys of post-structuralism. But they, being rather more clever than she, will not believe in it for a second.

A confession: As an art critic I feel somewhat put upon having to write about such nonsense as "Black Male." I am interested in art because I delight in such visual beauty as I find in the works of Titian, Degas, and Agnes Martin. From a critical point of view, however, such artists are largely beside the point these days, now that shows like "Black Male" receive all the attention. Furthermore, although I am confident I am not a racist myself, I am equally certain I have little of relevance to add to the discussion of race issues in contemporary America. And yet, in plying my humble trade, in dealing with contemporary art at all, I am constantly having to address such distractions. This is the repulsive burden that contemporary art places upon me, and I resent it. □

Mr. Gardner is NR*'s art critic and the author of* Culture or Trash? *(Birch Lane).*

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DELECTATIONS

Amateur Hour

DIGBY ANDERSON

I SMELLED trouble immediately upon smelling the joss sticks. And the sight of Louise Robinson in sari and with red splodge applied to forehead confirms that we are in for the worst. I dimly remember snatches of the early conversation. "An Indian dinner . . . done everything ourselves . . . Richard and I . . . such fun . . . wonderful new book . . . makes everything so straightforward." Then much later, "I thought the chicken came out rather better than the fish. I am sure it shouldn't have crumbled like that but anyway it tasted good. There's rather a lot of chappaties left."

The chappaties are discussed again after the evening is over, for dinner parties are always followed by post-mortems. Louise and Richard are on the whole very happy with the evening, still wonder why the chappaties did not work, and decide that next time they will use another recipe. Phil and Ann in their taxi home are rather more caustic. Ann thinks Louise was silly to have attempted her own chappaties without a proper Indian oven. And they both agree "Indian" was much too complicated a dinner to undertake. They decide that when the Robinsons come back to them on the 23rd, they will do an Italian dinner: Ann has a new book which . . .

What did go wrong with the chappaties? The same thing that went wrong with the fish. The same thing that will go wrong with Ann's risotto. It has nothing to do with mistakes in recipe books or not having the right equipment. The reason why so many dinner parties serve up awful food and why dishes such as chappaties or risotto are particularly horrid is—lack of practice. Let's give it straight: You want to serve homemade bread? You want to make risotto? Find two or three recipes and try each one out, say, ten times. Make your bread with flour from this store and that, try the rice from this store and that. Then when you have made chappaties thirty or forty times, when you know about consistencies, proving times, required temperatures, the effects of keeping the dough for different times and in different temperatures, when you know all these things from *experience*, you will be in a position to invite your chums to dinner. To do so before is not only bad cooking but damn bad manners.

There is no shortcut, no miracle book or TV chef, no tip, no expensive corner-cutting ingredient: you must practice. And practice in cooking, like practice in music or anything else worth while, has to be done at frequent intervals. You can't learn to make good rice by cooking it once a month. The best advice is every day. If you are serious about learning Indian, Cantonese, or any other cuisine, then do this: go out and get the ingredients for a siege. You are going to cook and eat nothing but Bengali or Cantonese for three months. Do that and you will acquire skills and knowledge you will never forget. During the early stages of the three months you will make mistakes. Devote extra time and ingredients so you can have two or three goes a day. You will waste ingredients and have to throw failures away. So what? It's better than inflicting your incompetence on your friends.

The Robinsons' problem is that they are part of a new type of cook, the very opposite of the practiced cook, the "Special Occasionist." This person hardly cooks from one week to the next—too busy making money, going to the theater, or watching television. Then suddenly, he decides to spend a whole day cooking and give a dinner party. He treats cooking like some instantly acquirable trick: buy the right book, spend enough on equipment and ingredients, and the knowledge of centuries and civilizations is yours in time to greet Phil and Ann on Saturday at 8 P.M. And 101 cookbook writers, food columnists, and TV chefs collude in this evil lie. "Go on," they shout. "Give it a try, anyone can do it. It's easy, just follow the recipe, try it this weekend, cook without trouble and effort, fool-proof and quick too. And fun. Cooking's fun."

Oh! No, it isn't. Your contempt for wisdom and effort will catch you out. Your paella will be hard or sticky. Your risotto will burn on the bottom. Your chappaties will be heavy and the fish will indeed fall to bits. But worse, the truth applies to other less exotic cuisines. Your boiled eggs will never be perfect. Your omelettes never light. Your oven pasta dishes never as they should be. Your dinners never quite what you hoped for. And it will serve you right. □

Mr. Anderson is the editor of The Loss of Virtue *(National Review Books), which has just been released in a paperback version.*

BOOKS IN BRIEF

What Went Wrong: The Creation and Collapse of the Black–Jewish Alliance, by Murray Friedman (Free Press, 407 pp., $24.95)

THE black–Jewish alliance is dead, declares the author, a historian. His well-researched, balanced, and objective account shows that as far back as the mid nineteenth century, blacks regarded Jews with a mixture of admiration, hostility, and distrust. Likewise, some Jews held racist attitudes toward blacks, although they treated blacks better than other whites did. The blacks' complaint about Jews' alleged influence on the government and the media is old. *The Age*, a black newspaper, alleged in 1891 that "Jews through their instrument, the *New York Times*, influenced foreign policy, but hurt Negroes in America." *The Age* also accused the *Times* of "sowing seeds of race prejudice against Negroes" by publishing letters to the editor that emphasized black crime rather than black accomplishment. Still, as long as blacks and Jews battled shared obstacles, their alliance endured. It began to falter when black nationalists turned the civil-rights movement into a race revolution. Mr. Friedman refutes the revisionist historians who claim there never was a real black–Jewish alliance. "Once upon a time, Jews and blacks wrote some of the finest pages" in America's story, he remarks, "shedding their blood to redeem the promise of American life." As for the present, he sensibly advises blacks and Jews to keep out of each other's way.

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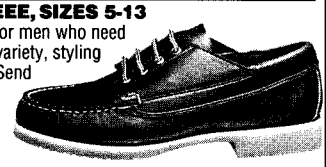

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O'SULLIVAN

(Continued from page 66)

mass immigration: the Great Wave of 1880 to 1924 and the period since the 1965 Act, which has seen immigration rise to 1.3 million annually.

Any wave of immigration, moreover, has pushed public opinion firmly in favor of restrictions. Restrictionist legislation was firmly (and popularly) in place from 1925 to 1965. And public-opinion polls have shown a steady two-thirds of Americans favoring less immigration since the mid sixties. The "lived experience of American culture," therefore, includes not only long periods of little or no immigration, but also the imposition of high immigration levels upon a reluctant people by the alienated American overclass.

Fr. Neuhaus joins that class in dismissing popular anxieties. He thinks its "very improbable" that immigration has contributed economically to the plight of the black underclass. Admittedly, immigration is only one factor contributing to that plight—others are the decline of blue-collar jobs, the minimum wage, and the welfare-induced crisis of the black family—but over thirty years it has been an important factor. If the U.S. had not admitted ten million, generally low-paid immigrants during the 1980s, would more black Americans have been employed at higher rates of pay? Very probably. (Still, the debate suggests a useful definition of the term "nativist": someone who thinks that black Americans have a greater claim than immigrants on the support of their fellow Americans.)

Fr. Neuhaus judges that immigration does not foster inter-ethnic violence because it is committed mainly by native black Americans. But it was no part of my argument that immigrants were to blame: ("That is not to say that immigrants are responsible for such violence; very often they are the victims of it.") My point, supported by arguments Fr. Neuhaus does not address, was that present levels of immigration fostered conditions which made violence more likely. But he is wrong to place the blame for violence so heavily on native black Americans. In the L.A. riots, for instance, they were fewer than half of those arrested—3,083 compared to 4,307 Hispanics, of whom more than 800 were illegal aliens. Similarly, the riots in Washington Heights were the work mainly of Dominican immigrants. We should provide no semblance of an excuse for anyone who beats up anyone; nor should we blink at the truth.

Fr. Neuhaus believes, finally, that arguments over immigration obscure the real problems of multiculturalism and welfare. These are indeed damaging programs which we should either abolish or drastically reform. But high levels of immigration serve to expand both by adding to their client constituencies. My argument to this effect went unaddressed by Fr. Neuhaus—perhaps because he hopes the new Congress will soon render it moot. I share his hope. But the early signs are that welfare at least is likely to be transferred to the states. In which case, it might be abolished—in Utah.

Naturally, I am pleased that Fr. Neuhaus favors immigration reform. Of course, the pages of NR will be open to the "full range of arguments over what ought to be done and why." But when he discusses the principles that should underpin such reform, has he misinterpreted my endorsement of "an American ethnicity" and of America as a nation "in the European sense" as indicating a racial or ethnic exclusivity? The American identity defended in my two articles—a cultural identity evolving into an ethnic one—incorporates all America's constituent ethnicities, and the common culture unifying it is enriched from non-Anglo sources.

Thus, when Fr. Neuhaus asks if native black Americans would be WASPs by now without immigration, the answer is, of course, that neither the subjunctive mood nor the qualification applies. Black Americans are *already* WASPs in my slightly metaphorical sense, that is, full heirs to an American culture with British roots but exotic foliage. Their claim to membership in it is at least as good as my own since, when their ancestors were living in West African villages, my own forebears were paddling coracles and speaking Gaelic in the West of Ireland. In particular, the language of the King James Bible—which Fr. Neuhaus doubted should be in my samples of American culture—vibrates as naturally in black churches as it did in Lincoln's speeches. Indeed, a recent "Gospel Rap" song describes a sinner fighting the Devil with his "King James switchblade." Culture develops—and preserves. I rest my case. □

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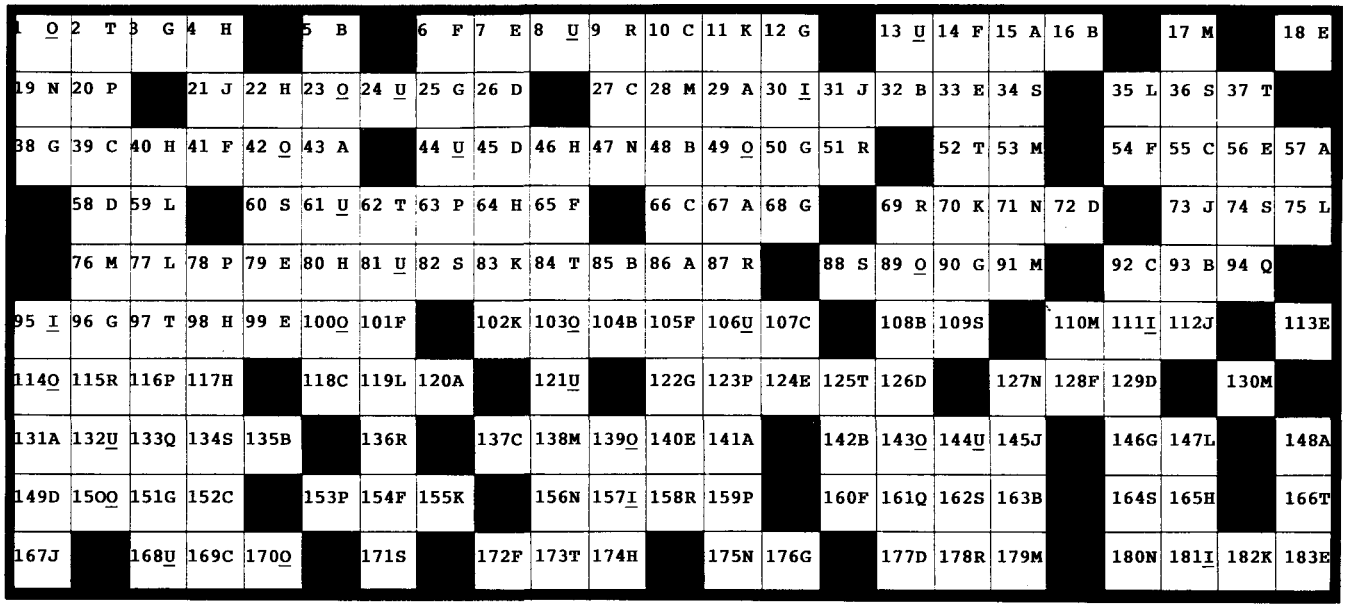
TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney



DEFINITIONS

A. World Trade Center, e.g. (2 words) — 120 131 86 15 141 67 148 57 29 43

B. Removal — 16 142 32 48 5 163 93 85 108 104 135

C. Troubling public-school trend (2 words) — 137 55 27 118 10 152 66 107 39 92 169

D. Hogwash — 129 149 58 177 26 126 45 72

E. Loyal to the end — 79 140 18 7 124 183 56 99 33 113

F. Bargain hunter's delight (2 words) — 65 105 160 6 14 101 128 54 154 172 41

G. Canadian province — 122 3 38 176 96 90 146 68 25 151 50 12

H. Growth (var.) — 64 80 165 98 46 117 40 22 4 174

I. Ohio or Missouri, e.g. — 95 111 157 181 30

J. Religious no-no — 73 145 21 167 112 31

K. Less complicated — 70 102 155 83 11 182

L. Group from which gangs recruit — 59 147 119 35 77 75

M. Proliferating post-office problem (2 words) — 76 110 28 17 179 53 130 138 91

N. Amazing, to def. L — 19 180 156 71 175 127 47

O. Not exactly eclectic — 100 23 114 103 89 1 150 143 42 139 49 170

P. Port sights — 153 63 78 159 116 123 20

Q. Type squares — 161 133 94

R. One of the Azores — 51 158 69 87 178 136 9 115

S. Former trouble spot for USSR — 134 60 34 36 171 109 74 88 164 162 82

T. Pliant — 97 52 62 2 125 84 173 166 37

U. Highest peak in Africa — 144 81 24 121 44 61 106 13 168 8 132

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram. WILLIAM RASPBERRY: *Who?:* "After nearly two years in office, President Clinton has yet to establish in the minds of the people the nature of his political core. We have no clear idea of what he stands for when the chips are down . . ."

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Fun & Games With The Majority Vote

NEW YORK, JANUARY 16

The Contractors are off to a pretty good start, and it is strange to hear some of the criticism from Democratic quarters. When this criticism is allowed to focus other than on the hatred we should all feel toward rich people, it has focused on the alleged anti-deliberative nature of the legislative blitzkrieg.

It is strange to hear because most of the objectives of the Contract are public-policy measures that have been discussed for years. It is hardly a surprise that a line-item veto is wanted for the President, who after all had it up until it was removed from President Nixon in 1974, which was when just about everything was removed from President Nixon including the Oval Office.

There is however one exception, which is the proposal to require a three-fifths vote of Congress to raise taxes. This initiative invites thought both political and philosophical.

The idea of requiring a supermajority to bring certain things about is rooted in the Constitution itself, which of course requires two-thirds of each house of Congress and three-fourths of the states to effect a constitutional amendment. The idea is to pitch a particular law beyond the reach of a bare majority. The Constitution, for example, requires two-thirds of the Senate to convict an impeached President, and two-thirds of either house to expel a member.

One Democratic congressman has raised the philosophical question: How can Congress, by a simple majority, vote into existence a procedure requiring a three-fifths vote? Are we here engaged in an orthogenetic expansion of power?

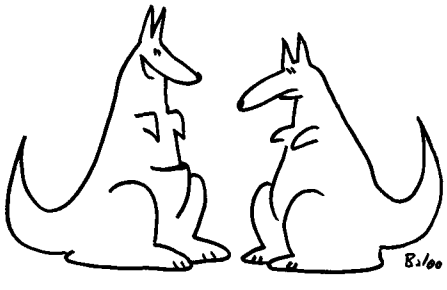
The point is interesting, but it is not novel in the American situation. The amendment clause in our Constitution (Article V) reads: ". . . no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the ninth Section of the first Article; and . . . no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate." The Constitution avoided the use of the word "slave," but here the Founders were reassuring the Southern slaveholders that no legislative action would diminish the Southerners' rights to count a slave as three-fifths of a human being, for purposes of calculating congressional representation. And the second clause was an attempt to guarantee to the states whose votes were needed to ratify the Constitution, that they would forever be secure in the inequality of their representation: thus Rhode Island and California continue to have an equal voice in the Senate.

The rigid logician might have asked, and no doubt did during the constitutional debates, What is to keep the Congress and the states from enacting a constitutional amendment to repeal Article V, or to modify it to abolish Senate inequalities? Senator Clark of Pennsylvania in fact proposed just such a measure some twenty years ago, in an egalitarian frenzy. Presumably the Supreme Court would be needed to decide whether a constitutional amendment reducing representation in the Senate was do-able. It might be excused as being the letter of the law, certainly not the spirit.

By the same token, one would think that a future Congress that wanted to raise the tax but could not summon a three-fifths majority might be tempted with a bare majority to amend Mr. Gingrich's contract. But it is entirely another question whether politically we should be prepared to anoint one more procedure as requiring a supermajority. The idea of making taxation a more solemn event than it now is appeals. But we must give weight to the risk of immobilizing the legislature. It is fortunate that we tend to get along with two political parties, but in the parliamentary world it is unusual, and if congressional power were divided among three or more parties, to assemble three-fifths of the vote could be hard.

Let it be hard? Good point. But the level of taxation should really be self-regulating, and there is a way to accomplish this, which is—proportional taxation. The pressure is then there from the voters in general, not just from the hardest hit. And anyway, isn't Milton Friedman correct that our approach to the problem of the deficit is misdirected? We shouldn't be limiting taxes, we should be limiting spending.

No Law which may be made prior to the Year Two thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner authorize the Government to spend more than 20 per cent of the gross national Product. □



"Oh, junior almost never comes out—he's a real pouch potato."

The Silent Rooters

NEW YORK, JANUARY 3

By American standards, sad to say, Mr. John Salvi did not kill all that many people. If two dead, five wounded, had happened in South Central Los Angeles or East Harlem or Newark, in or near a shopping center, bus station, athletic supply store, amusement park, public swimming pool, or subway, the ration of space given over to the criminal episode would have been routine. The statistical news over the weekend was that New York City has benefited from a dramatic 10 per cent decrease in homicide—a mere 1,584 persons were killed in 1994. If you had given front-page attention to each of those, that comes to four stories per day, leaving scant room for Bosnia, North Korea, or Paula Jones.

Yet the *New York Times*, acclaimed as the model of sobriety, gave not just front-page attention to Salvi's shootings but the upper-right-hand spot on the front page reserved for the major news event of the preceding day. And not only on Day #1, but on Day #2. Why such attention? Because the background of the shooting was an abortion center. The planted axiom is that people who oppose abortion are ready to gun down those who perform abortions, administer to their operations, or patronize their facilities.

The following three days saw a frantic scurrying by the media for information about the killer. He had, by this time, been apprehended after shooting another few rounds of .22 calibre bullets into an abortion franchise in Virginia. The disap-

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pointment came when, searching into his background, it was learned that, yes, Mr. Salvi was opposed to abortion, but, no, there were no grounds for assuming he had been preoccupied with the cause. He appears to be someone who acted more or less on impulse, and it is probably not reckless to guess that when the time comes to try him for murder, his lawyer will plead insanity of some kind.

The next objective was to find someone who defended what Salvi had done. One paper made mention of persons who had defended his acts, though the dispatch gave the names of only two.

One has the feeling that it was a frustrating search, inasmuch as not one accredited anti-abortion organization has defended, let alone urged, violence in behalf of its cause. When Mr. Paul Hill was convicted of killing an abortionist and his bodyguard and was sentenced to death, there was no March on Washington to protest the verdict. A public demonstration to defend Mr. Salvi brought together a total of eight people. When Cardinal O'Connor was asked to express himself on anti-abortionists who want to approach the abattoirs with gun in hand, his simple statement was, "Let them kill me." A dramatic but eye-catching means of condemning utterly any such action.

Now, America being as America is, there are extremists in practically every political camp. There were certainly extremists fighting the abolition of Jim Crow, and one of them got so exercised on the subject, he killed Martin Luther King. There was plenty of heat on the other side, and one person who hungered for historical recognition, and no doubt fancied himself a champion of civil rights, decided to make his point by shooting Governor George Wallace. And then someone outraged by the pro-Israel policies of our government satisfied himself to make his point by assassinating Robert F. Kennedy. Five years earlier, someone protesting our anti-Castro policies thought to assassinate President John F. Kennedy.

Now these shootings obviously got a great deal of publicity. But that publicity had to do with the eminence of the targets. The shootings were not implicitly reported as object lessons in the terrible lengths to which opposition to civil rights, or to a tough anti-Communist policy, or to Jim Crow, or to a pro-Israel policy could take people. The anti-Vietnam protestors killed and dynamited people every now and again, but their acts were not translated into condemnation of the anti-Vietnam movement. You can maintain with learned conviction that Lenin was a pure product of Bolshevism. But you can't get very far contending that Sirhan Sirhan is the flower of partisanship against Israel, or that James Earl Ray is the authentic child of opposition to the civil-rights acts.

So that Mr. Salvi is singular not in his devotion to life, but in the madness of his advocacy of it. Forgive us, Father, for we sin by saying it, but our guess is that more people who are opposed to abortion were agonized by what Salvi did than those Choicers who silently welcome the man who puts anti-abortion protest on the front page, demonstrating the inherent violence of that position. □

Loony Drug Laws

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 23

She is my baby sister, I am her godfather, and though she has run her own life for many years there is now, however temporary, a dependency, or rather a need, and it boils the blood with anger that I cannot help her. Why? Because the idiot squad might see the transaction and put one or both of us in jail.

What she wants is, as she puts it, a little "cannabis." Because she is undergoing a jolt of chemotherapy resulting in racking nausea. How does she know cannabis would help her? Dumb question. a) She knows, or knows of, people who have had relief from the wretchedness she suffers, through a puff or two of marijuana; and b) so what if it did not work? If she doesn't get relief, she doesn't get relief; end experiment. What are we afraid of, that while recovering from cancer and taking a marijuana cigarette she will become a crack addict?

I said to her over the telephone: "Why don't you just go out on the street and get it?" Answer: "I know it's all over the place, but I don't know where physically to go. And anyway, all the vendors expect people in their teens or twenties, and I wouldn't fit. They'd look at me suspiciously."

"Why don't you get Ann" (her daughter lives 25 miles away) "to go and get it for you?" Answer: "I wouldn't ask her. She's totally law-abiding, and I wouldn't want to embarrass her."

So why doesn't her big brother, sitting here in New York pecking away on the word processor, haul his big behind to get some and send it to her? Answer: Because big brother actually doesn't know to turn right or left when he leaves the building, wonders (since he is a resourceful type) whether he should buy one of those trained dogs and ask him to lead big brother to the nearest marijuana plant. But mostly because big brother is a coward, and there is just that chance that a lurking narc would spot him paying cash for enough marijuana to relieve baby sister and decide that was a dreamy photo op, I mean not on the order of Zapruder or Rodney King, but it would be fun to be the cause of sending that right-wing encephalophone off to prison for a couple of years for violating the drug laws.

Newt reported a couple of weeks ago that he had heard it said that one-quarter of the White House staff had been taking drugs in the years leading up to their employment in the White House. This was denounced by Leon Panetta et al. as the most irresponsible blather yet from that king of irresponsibility. But then, as reported in this journal recently, somebody noticed the 1991 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. What it said was that 18.4 per cent of respondents between the ages of 26 and 34 reported that they had used an illegal drug during the last year.

Now people tend to protect their own reputations, even anonymously. Nobody, answering a poll, would confess to having racial prejudice. So we can assume that if 18 per cent reported having experimented with an illegal drug, probably the figure was higher. So? So then if the government's own surveyors inform us that approximately 25 per cent of the people of that age occasionally use an illegal drug, why should the young people who went to work for the White House be different? It isn't as if Mr. Clinton's White House were approached as one might approach work for a Carthusian monastery.

Probably the drug these people had used was marijuana. Statistics published on December 13 report a slight increase by school-age children in the use of that drug. What about the war on drugs? Well, what about it? Should we fight it more fiercely? Execute the kids?

Thinking on the subject is so far gone in putrefaction that the simplest questions go unanswered. Researchers in San Francisco spent a couple of years developing a plan for exploring the clinical effects of cannabis on people suffering from certain maladies. They proposed to test the effectiveness of the drug in treating the wasting syndrome associated with AIDS. But—the Drug Enforcement Administration has contrived to get the National Institute on Drug Abuse to deny the necessary marijuana for testing.

You shut your eyes in frustration. If somebody discovered that marijuana would *cure* AIDS, would the narcs still prowl the streets for vendors? □

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Words Mean . . . Things

THE latest battle cry among conservatives, picked up from Rush Limbaugh, is: "Words mean things." You may have noticed that it started cropping up in soundbites some months ago. Well, now it is the soundbite. I was dutifully watching the news when suddenly some triumphant Republican loomed up and gleefully announced, "Words mean things." Just that, nothing more. I waited to find out what things words mean, but I had heard all I was going to hear. That was it. Over and out. Me gone.

This is destined to be a lost cause. The American approach to words is willfully Druidic: Words mean . . . things. Years ago in one of his language books Edwin Newman noted that airlines were offering passengers "a cup of *au jus*." People ordered it blithely, amid murmurs of "I love *au jus*" and "*au jus* really hits the spot." It had nothing to do with their grasp of French; rather, it was that nobody saw anything wrong with ordering "a cup of with gravy," or saying "I love with gravy" and "with gravy really hits the spot." Not to worry, America said to Newman. Some day, when *au jus* has been on menus as long as *à la mode*, people will get it right. Meanwhile, shut up and drink your with gravy.

Champions of Words Mean Things must also combat America's ingrained democratic responses to malapropisms. There are two. "It doesn't matter how you say it as long as people understand what you mean" is our linguistic divining rod; each time it quivers a raving lunatic is upgraded to a spokesperson for the homeless. The other response, "It's not polite to correct people," is our sole remaining form of etiquette, punctiliously adhered to by all, especially English teachers.

Another stumbling block is our tacit concurrence that imprecise speech is an island of safety in a disintegrating society. Using certain words incorrectly cloaks some parlous truths about American life. The current fad among pundits for calling Lloyd Bentsen *patrician* has paralleled the descent of the Clintons back into the Erskine Caldwell novel whence they came; *patrician* now means "not awful."

The way we sling *erudite* around says everything about our non-existent intellectual and educational standards. Reviewers have been calling me erudite for twenty years. It means someone who likes to read. It means "acting white" when you already are. It means knowing how to work in quotations without using footnotes. All you have to do is write "Socrates said the unexamined life is not worth living" and somebody will call you *erudite*.

Using *cancer* literally instead of metaphorically would wreck American discourse Right and Left. Ayn Rand told her doctor that cancer was caused by "bad premises." She had no bad premises; therefore she did not have cancer. Liberals think the same way; their definition of cancer is any growth on the body politic that challenges their premises. For example, if I keep smoking three packs a day I will die of lung racism.

The now-ubiquitous *choose*, birthed by the abortion movement, has been used so much and so automatically that it is no longer even a word, just a speech habit similar to throat clearing. It is now a fixture of public-service announcements and rebuttal ads. Newspapers contain full-page letters addressed to "People Who *Choose* to Drink and Drive" (people who drink and drive!). Philip Morris U.S.A. defends "Americans who *choose* to smoke" (who smoke!), saying they "have the right to make a personal *choice*" (the right to smoke!). And of course, there is no such thing as a plain old college; the operative phrase is "the college of your *choice*." This fixation on choosing may mean that Americans are groping for the Christian concept of free will, but it sounds more like another dung hill of democracy to me.

Words cannot mean things to people who have learned to filter them as well as we have. Political correctness has breathed new life into the paralepsis, the rhetorical device whereby we make a statement by first announcing that we are not going to make it. When pundits write, "No one is suggesting . . ." the American eye reads "I'm suggesting." When we hear, "This is not to say . . ." we translate it as, "I'm saying." The standard formulas of feminism, such as "our fighting men and women," have trained us to regard words as nothing but aids to fantasy, and the Clintons have reduced us to infantilism: *agenda* means something bad; *plan* means something boring; and *ideology* means something dumb.

WORDS do mean things. Take *fungible*. The dictionary defines it as something that can be exchanged for something else when paying debts, as when a farmer pays a shoemaker in eggs instead of money. Not true; *fungible* is the sound you make when the periodontist says "bite down"—proof that you have eschewed flossing.

Or take *gravamen*. The dictionary defines it as a legal term, from the Latin *gravare*, "to burden," meaning the most serious charge in an indictment. Wrong. It's actually an eponym.

Count Manfred Gravamen (1835-1906) was a trusted Hapsburg minister ordered by Emperor Franz Josef to spy on Empress Elizabeth. A firm believer in getting the worst over with, Count Gravamen always kicked off his imperial reports with, "First, the bad news."

Every day brought fresh evidence that Elizabeth was one Sacher torte short of a full tray.

"First, the bad news: she gave a tea for the Hungarian revolutionists."

"First, the bad news: she ordered her ladies to speak nothing but Magyar."

"First, the bad news: she communes with the spirit of the poet Heine, whose works Your Majesty has banned."

"First, the bad news: she's collecting Gypsy midgets for her private circus."

"First, the bad news: she's hanging upside down on a trapeze."

"First, the bad news: she's eating sand."

Finally, Franz Josef began greeting his minister with, "Well, what's today's gravamen?" and a word was born.

—FLORENCE KING

St. Martin's published The Florence King Reader, *an anthology, on January 14.*

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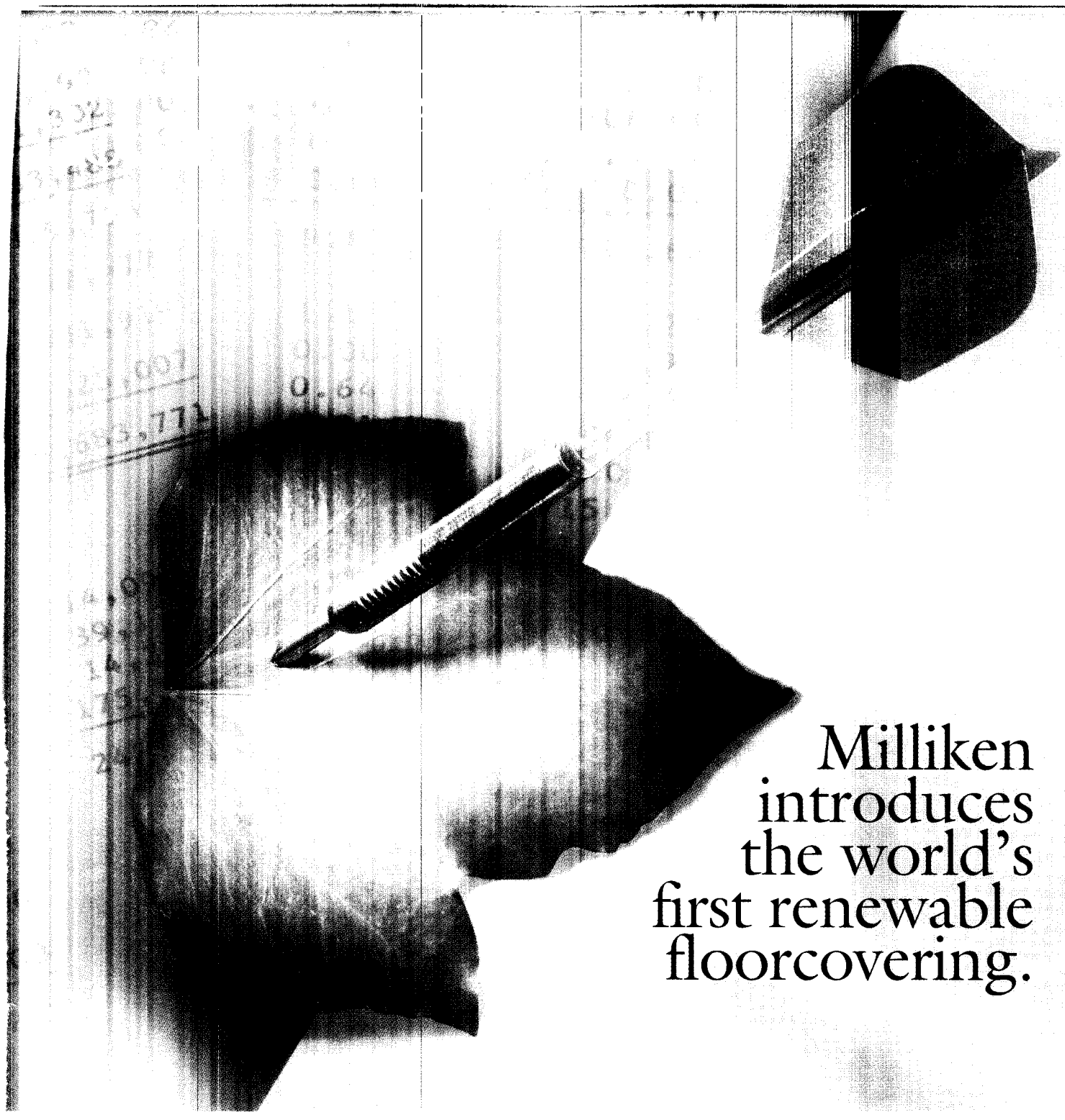

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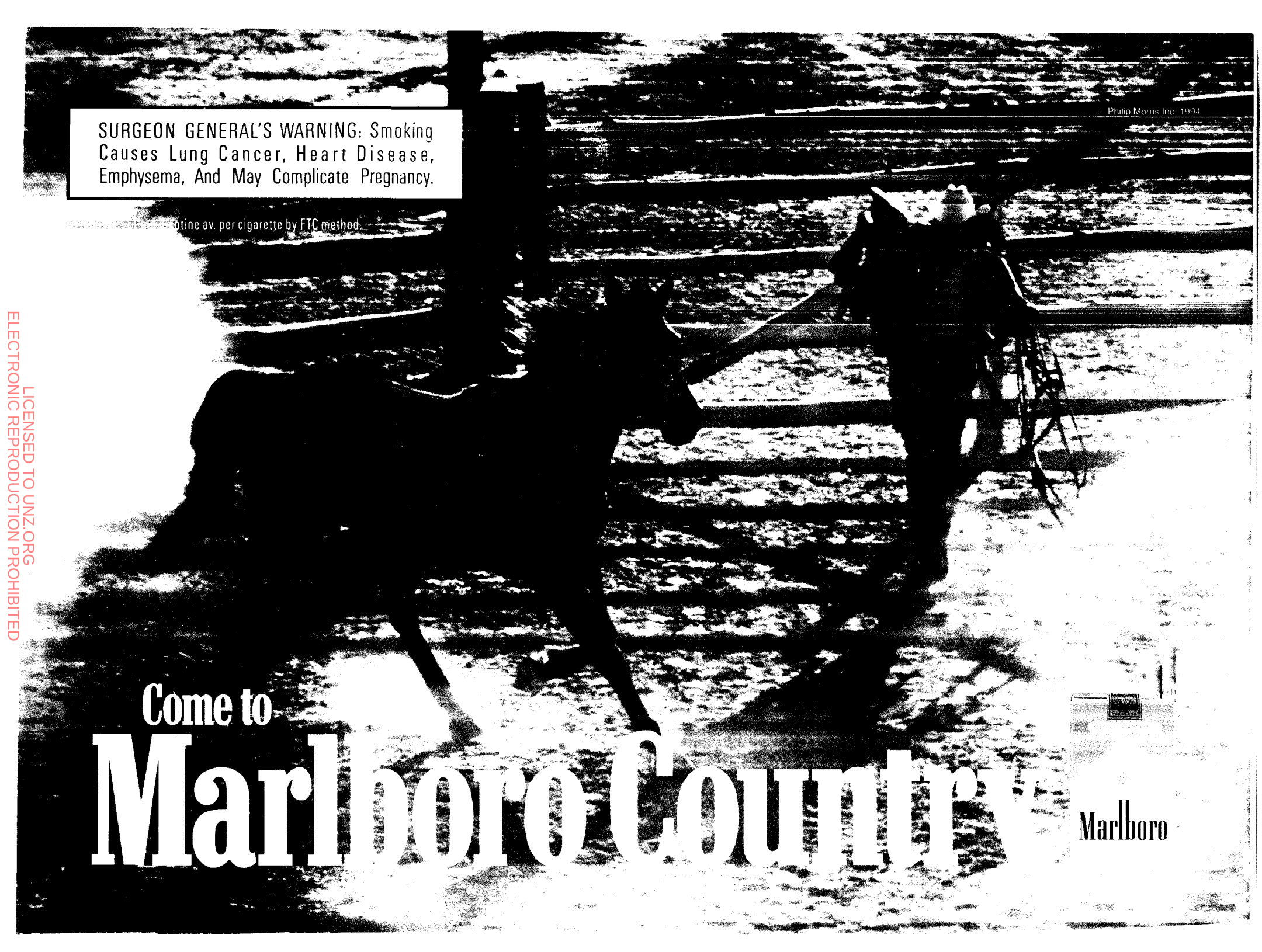
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